THE MORAL ADJUSTMENTS of the CHRISTIAN LIFE

Rev. G. A. PEGRAM

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The Moral Adjustments
of the
Christian Life

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Published by
KABLE BROTHERS COMPANY
Mount Morris, Illinois

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$1.00

JAN 27 1916

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No. 1.

PREFACE

A NEW book on the christian life might not seem to be needed, when the book market is flooded with religious books of all kinds, and upon practically every phase of the christian life. But there are several reasons for another. There is scarcely any phase of the christian life which has not been at least mentioned, or touched upon by some religious writer. On the other hand, some phases and difficulties of the christian life are barely touched, and not fully discussed. It seems to the author that it would help clarify, the views of the christian life to discuss more fully those difficulties which are omitted by some writers, and barely mentioned by others. To do this properly it is necessary to discuss in perspective the general trend of the christian life.

The need and advantage of this form of discussion was not only suggested, but also started a number of years ago while the writer was conducting a revival in one of the eastern States. The altar was filled with seekers nearly every night. Most of them seemed to have difficulty in attaining a clear religious experience. The pastor of the Church suggested to the writer that he give a few talks on the steps in the christian life. He did so, and the result was that their doubts and fears appeared to vanish away very fully and rapidly, and nearly every one of those seekers soon came into a clear experience of salvation. And the presentation of these views has met with similar favorable results

every time. The substance of many of these amplified discussions has been preached in quite a number of different states with fruitful results in a quickened conscience, as well as in the easy and rapid settlement of former perplexing difficulties of their christian experience. So for several years, numbers of people who have been helped by these chapters have requested that they put into permanent form.

Then again, many of the difficulties of the christian life which perplex the most scrupulous and morbidly conscientious seem to be so often omitted from the discussion in works otherwise clear and complete in their statement of the general principles of the adjustment of christian conduct at the beginning of a new life in moral and spiritual things. Thoughts and advices most needed by this class of seekers and christians are usually the ones least discussed. There is a class of seekers who need and should have simply the main points and obligations of repentance and faith, for their perplexity arises mostly from rebellion against conviction of duty. But the former class needs instruction more than denunciation or exhortation. This book will help both classes, but is aimed more particularly for the former.

As the book is written simply for earnest, honest seekers after saving truth, no particular effort has been made for mere rhetoric. The principal aim has been to make the message plain and forcible. Rhetorical effort might make it more fascinating to some minds. But the writer's observations have been similar to those of John Wesley, that merely pretty writing does not help people's souls as much as does the plain matter-of-fact

style. For the same reason he said also that although he could write in an elegant style, he dared not do it. It is true however that most writers find themselves inclined to drift into rounding pretty sentences. But when so doing, the effort is usually manifest to please the mind instead of to convince or to persuade it. Experience and observation both show that plain simple preaching wins and helps more souls to Christ than does beautiful rhetoric. The same is true in regard to plain writing. But the writer humbly wishes that numerous pastoral cares would permit if possible a more comprehensive statement of the difficulties of christian life and experience, and a more thorough solution of them. But no book is ever perfect, and none can be made more than a mere index to the thoughts and sentiments of the author. So they have to be content with what they know is more or less deficient and imperfect.

No pretense is made to its perfection. In fact the author feels very much its imperfection. But he also feels that as these thoughts were blessed of God as they were spoken although they were imperfect, he expects that they will continue to be blessed of God as they are humbly and prayerfully sent forth in the Master's name to help hungry and perplexed souls who are striving to solve the problems, overcome the difficulties, and perform the duties of the christian life. For nearly all of the views herein taught have already been tested in the practical experiences of life. It was this fact that has led so many for the past several years to ask for their publication in permanent form. If under the blessing of God, they become a help to earnest,

honest seekers who are confused and perplexed in their christian life, or are tempted to turn back, or who have not yet found complete victory, into a better and more stable experience, the author will feel satisfied and gratified, no matter what objections or criticisms might be offered against it. For usefulness and helpfulness are the sole objects of its publication, and its usefulness and helpfulness will be its own vindication in the future as they have been in the past. So with the hope and prayer that these discussions may continue to be a blessing to humanity under the influence of the Holy Spirit, they are sent forth on their mission of helping struggling souls.

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THE MORAL ADJUSTMENTS OF LIFE.

PART I.

MORAL LIGHT.

CHAPTER I.

Relation of Knowledge to Duty.

THE Scriptures teach that they themselves are positive and potent factors in causing and maintaining, molding and developing the christian life. A man's adjustment to the will of God as expressed in His Holy Word depends more or less upon his native intelligence and the extent of his light. For that reason, one must know the limits of his light to know the extent of his moral obligation. Moral light produces several very beneficial results. It furnishes grounds for the faith to obtain salvation. It furnishes inspiration to seek the Lord. It supplies the wisdom to enable men to keep salvation when they get it. It affords directions and incentives to make and mold one's christian life. Scripture knowledge inspires and enables one to grow in grace. It inspires, encourages and directs one in christian work.

The Scriptures are said to be largely instrumental in producing the new birth. Several passages em-

phatically declare this. "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures."—Jas. 1:18. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." —I Pet. 1:23. The Spirit of God is the agent, and the word of God is the efficient instrument in producing our salvation. The Holy Spirit uses Scripture truth, which is His truth, in convicting men of sin and converting them to God and righteousness.

Then these same Scriptures are the efficient instrument in freeing us from the domination of sin, and effecting our salvation completely. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:32. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."—I Pet. 1:22. "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." —Acts 15:9. Notice in these passages that their hearts were purified by believing and obeying the truth. The real object of saving faith is divine truth. They believed the truth, and were saved and purified. Peter in defending himself, said to the council at Jerusalem, "God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."—Acts 15:7. Cornelius was told by the angel to send for Peter, "who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."—Acts 11:14. So it is very plain that men are sanctified by the same agent and by the same instrument as those by which they were regenerated.

Then a third important point is, that the Scriptures are necessary to maintain and develop the christian life. Regeneration is the beginning of a new life and sanctification is the transformation and preparation for a larger life. One is now simply ready to begin a successful and effective development of his life. Christ said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."—John 6 : 63. The old prophets declared, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," and "therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge."—Hos. 4 : 6; Isa. 5 : 13. So people wane and die in their religious life, because of a lack of proper instruction; or on the other hand, proper spiritual knowledge would have kept them from backsliding. People very often need more wisdom as well as more grace to save them from backsliding.

Again, growth in grace is intimately connected with growth in spiritual knowledge. The last recorded advice of Peter was, "But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—II Pet. 3 : 18. Christians must keep pace with the light that is flashed upon them to keep clear in their own religious experience. When we reach the limits of our light in the practice of righteousness, in christian work, and in spiritual conquest, we will stop growing spiritually unless we advance in spiritual wisdom. More light shows men more duties to perform, and supplies more wisdom for the proper performance thereof. Greater wisdom facilitates progress in personal development and spiritual attainment.

God holds men responsible not only for all the

light they have, but also for all that they can obtain. This principle and corresponding obligation are taught in several ways. Christ said in the parable of the unfaithful steward that a servant who did not his duty would be punished even though he knew not his duty, simply because he knew it not, and neglected to learn it. Luke 12:47. This shows that men are under constant obligation to learn their duty. There is one duty which is constant, unvarying and universal, and that is the duty of learning one's duty. The commands to "search the Scriptures," and to read, study and meditate, also inculcate this duty. Spiritual truth gives knowledge of duty, as well as inspires one in the performance of duty. Therefore we are under obligation to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls."—Jas. 1:21; "make us wise unto salvation," "and furnish us unto all good works."—II Tim. 3:15-17. So the Holy Ghost is the agent, and the word of God is the efficient instrument in our salvation from beginning to end, and in every step and phase of it.

I. Relation of knowledge to duty. A man is not responsible for the performance of any duty unless and until he has been enlightened in regard to it. A man may be responsible in regard to one act and not in regard to another. He is responsible only so far as he has been enlightened. The reality of moral obligation, and the actuality of sin, both depend upon the fact and extent of one's light and knowledge. The Holy Scriptures teach the same doctrine. It saith only "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, is it sin."—Jas. 4:17. Nor would it be just to

condemn a man for doing that concerning whose moral quality he had no knowledge nor question. Jesus said to the cavilling Jews, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, 'We see'; therefore your sin remaineth."—John 9:41. "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin."—John 15:22. It is for these reasons, too, that God judges men according to the light that is attainable by them, as well as by the light which they have. When light was not attainable by men, God "winked at those times of ignorance," "and in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways."—Acts 17:30; 14:16. But when light is attainable, men are required to get it.

Duty being dependent solely upon knowledge, where there is no knowledge there is no duty nor sense of moral obligation. Therefore this is more especially true where there is no ability, nor any opportunity to obtain light. In case of infants, idiots and lunatics, there is no ability to learn. No reasonable person thinks of holding this class of people responsible for their moral conduct. We have all frequently heard it said concerning some one that he or she was not responsible; meaning thereby that they did not know any better. In the case of heathen at home or abroad, they have had little opportunity to learn their duty, and so have but little responsibility. Infants, idiots and lunatics have but little or no mental capacity. All of these have some mental perception, usually of a low order, but lack the ability to reason. But this class as a rule lack much more in judgment than they do in perception. And one's moral sense depends

mostly if not wholly upon his judgment. For good morality is so often a mere propriety or a fitness of things. For the same reasons, infants, idiots and lunatics have but little if any moral obligation at all. For nothing is required of a man who is entirely devoid of knowledge because bereft of an opportunity of obtaining it, or is wholly lacking in moral judgment.

II. Duty is in proportion to knowledge. Out of this preceding proposition grows another principle, which is that duty is in proportion to knowledge. Here we see the reason why the man who knows his duty and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; while the man who knows not his duty and does it not, shall be beaten with a few stripes.—Luke 12:47f. Men are judged according to their deeds,—Luke 23:41; Rom. 2:6; II Cor. 5:10; but not alone according to them. Several other factors enter in to modify one's judgment of all moral acts. There are several principles which serve to gauge the status of men's moral conduct. These are their amount of light; their opportunities for obtaining more light; how much and how long they have resisted the light; the persistence and force of the temptations to which they have yielded, or which they have resisted; the amount and character of the inspiration and encouragement which they have received to do right; and the amount of evil resulting from their sins, or the good resulting from their right acts.

It was for these reasons that Christ declared that it would be more tolerable for the men of Nineveh in the day of judgment than for his earthly contemporaries. For the men of Nineveh had repented under less light

than the latter had, yet the latter had not repented at all. The queen of Sheba would condemn the men of Christ's time on earth, for she came hundreds of miles to hear the wisdom of Solomon, a mere man, while these men refused to hear the incarnation of divine wisdom at their very doors.—Mat. 12:41f. For the same reason, too, Christ spoke more favorably of the publicans and harlots than he did of the scribes and Pharisees.—Mat. 21:31f. Likewise also the chief priests and the rabbis were more culpable than were the laity among the Jews, for the teachers usually have more knowledge than do the disciples.

The dependency of duty upon knowledge is concretely stated in Luke 12:47f. This passage explicitly declares that the man who knows his duty and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; while the man who knows not his duty and does it not, shall be beaten with few stripes. Here is plainly stated a difference in knowledge, and a difference in the degree of obligation, as is clearly implied by the difference in punishment. Because a difference in punishment implies a difference in the obligation. For it would be unjust to make a difference in the punishment of people whose knowledge and obligations were identical.

These principles are recognized, acted upon, and enforced in daily life. Civil service examinations are held for the very purpose of ascertaining whether some people are capable of performing certain civic duties or not. If found capable, they are accepted for civil positions and used; if not, they are refused. Even in time of war, when there is positive demand for troops, and conscription acts are passed, and every man be-

tween certain ages is listed, many of whom are drafted, all are required to pass a physical examination to ascertain whether or not they are qualified for military duty. If they are so qualified, they become soldiers; if not, they remain citizens, and are still under obligation to perform all the duties of citizens. Some states have an educational suffrage. In such cases and states the citizens can exercise all the rights of franchise only as they are able to read the Constitution, or show their literary attainments in some similar way.

In private and social matters, our judgment concerning a transgressor is lenient or severe according to the extent of his knowledge of right and wrong, or in proportion to his opportunities or ability to obtain such knowledge. For the same reason we would not blame a child for that which we would consider very reprehensible in an adult. So also we would excuse a heathen for that for which we would very severely condemn a native of a civilized land. We would very readily excuse an idiot or a lunatic for doing almost anything, while we would make no such allowance for a sane man. But few in this country or in India would think of condemning the Hindu woman who thinks it is her religious duty to cast her baby into the Ganges to the crocodiles. But let a woman in christian America drown her baby, and she would be convicted of murder in the first degree. Civil and divine law agree on these principles. An idiot or a lunatic would be sent to the Home for the Feeble Minded or to the Asylum for a murder for which a sane man would be sent to the gallows, electric chair, or to the state prison for life. The former would be

sent to these places not so much as a punishment as for a protection to the public. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more."—Luke 12:48.

The same principles are observed also in school life. Children who cannot read or write are not put to studying science, literature or mathematics. Every one is expected to begin at the bottom, and pass each grade in order till he graduates. All are not put in the same grade. Neither do they begin at the top. Tasks are given to some which would be absolutely impossible to others. Requirements are made and punishments are applied on the same principles. The weak-minded, young and inexperienced are treated more leniently than are others. Church Conferences, Synods and Associations follow the same principles in arranging their work. As a rule older and more experienced ministers are appointed to the larger and more difficult places, and the less experienced to the smaller ones. This is not always true; but it is the general rule with few exceptions.

III. One is under obligation to learn his duty. There are several reasons for this. It is implied in the fact that a man is punished for not doing his duty even though he knew it not. It would be wrong to punish a man for neglecting to learn his duty, if it was not necessary, if it was not possible, and if it was not obligatory to do so. For punishment to be just, implies all three of these.

There are two classes here. One case is that of those who for the first time are convinced that a cer-

tain act or course of conduct is wrong. It is their duty to learn the reason why such acts or courses of conduct are wrong, that they may know better how to correct their own faulty conduct, and that they may warn others, and give the reasons therefor. The reasons why any act or course of conduct is wrong usually suggest a method for the correction of such conduct. Another reason therefor is, that a man may investigate his own past record, to see whether he has committed any sins of ignorance or not, and what they were, that he may be able to correct his own conduct, if need be. For God requires sins of ignorance to be confessed, rectified, and atoned for, as the case may require.

The other case is when a man begins to question the rightness or propriety of some act or course of conduct. For from that moment he becomes responsible for that act or course of conduct whose moral quality his conscience has called in question. This is divine light seeking entrance into the soul, and cannot he rejected nor disregarded without condemnation and relapse into darkness, both intellectual and experimental. The question here may not be in regard to the moral quality of the act itself, but in regard to the motive or manner of its performance. The fact is, the act itself may be really proper and obligatory, but the motive for, and manner of, its performance, may be wrong. In any of the above cases, the first duty of every man is to seek the truth, and learn what is the right thing to do, and the proper manner to perform it. He must not go forward till he knows the will of God, and until his own duty is clear. It is just as

much his duty to stop and investigate when in doubt, as it is to go forward when he has learned what he ought to do. The danger warnings along the railroads to "Stop! Look! Listen!" are very applicable here. A man is under obligation to observe and heed those danger signals along the railroad; and it is his duty also to observe and heed the danger warnings along the path of life. Trains are not allowed to leave the station until the conductor has received orders from headquarters. And usually, but not always, when orders are received, they are to be carried out immediately.

One class of acts is that of those whose propriety or rightness the conscience calls in question only to forbid, and only for the purpose of forbidding. One can usually learn the reason for such prohibitions, though not always at the time. For occasionally there are cases when God wants to test the faith and obedience of His children by requiring them to obey without letting them know the reason why. Usually a man may learn the reason why immediately, but sometimes he may not. But it is enough to know that it is God's will. Genuine obedience obeys with or without explanations. The obedient child simply requires God's will to be made plain to him. It is

"Theirs not to make reply;
Theirs not to reason why;
Theirs but to do and die."

The soldiers of Christ ought to obey as unhesitatingly as did the soldiers of England. Unhesitating obedience to the clear will of God shows men's faith in

God. It was the unhesitating obedience to all the clear will of God, when all that it implied was not known to him, that made Abraham the great example of faith in the Bible. It was for this very quality that he was commended, "when he went out, not knowing whither he went," "when he was commanded to go out to his inheritance."—Heb. 11:8. He was given an inheritance, but what and where he did not know.

Another case for consideration is, when the motive or manner of an act is under consideration, or when the wisdom or propriety of one's course should be decided. The question of the motive, manner or moral propriety of an act is thrust upon the christian to be settled, because it must be settled, that neither his own christian experience, nor that of others may be destroyed nor hindered. If there was no need for them to be settled, the Spirit would never thrust them into our minds to be settled. The devil never taxes men's consciences any. A general belief in right and wrong is usually sufficient for him. Yet in some cases he may annoy conscientious people over quibbles and controverted questions that he may confuse and disturb their faith and experience.

But God wants His people to have clear, clean-cut distinctions between right and wrong. Therefore when any doubts as to the moral status of any act or course of conduct arises in a person's mind, his first duty is to think and pray through them. People cannot pass these questions by without rejecting the light that God sends them. Doubt in regard to the rightness or propriety of any moral act tends to make the thoughtful and conscientious more careful in his

conduct. But the rash usually rush on without thinking of proprieties. While occasionally the hypersensitive meditate and hesitate too much.

Learning one's duty is one of the elements of obedience. The man who wants to please the Lord, wants to learn what is the exact will of God, so that he may obey the real will of God, and not the will of some one else. But the man who does not want to obey the Lord, does not want to learn His will.—Isa. 1:3; Prov. 1:15ff. "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." —John 3:19f. This principle is frequently applied in everyday life. Sometimes when one person loves another, and desires to make him a present, or give him a reception or a surprise party, he will use a variety of means to ascertain what that party desires, even when such party conceals his wishes, lest he should unduly burden his friends. People should manifest the same zeal and effort in learning the word, will and ways of God, that they may please Him. And real earnest souls are anxious to learn the will of God. Sammy Morris came all the way from Africa to New York City to ask Stephen Merritt about the Holy Ghost. He was sorry and disappointed when Stephen Merritt showed him and told him about so many other things before he told him about the Holy Ghost. He was thinking about the Holy Ghost all the time, and cared but little for mere sight-seeing in a strange city. Men go all the way to Florida, Colorado, Cali-

fornia, and to Europe for the sake of their health. They go to Cambridge, Oxford, Paris, Berlin, yea, they search the whole world around to gain worldly knowledge that passes away. Yet spiritual truth never passes away, and is necessary to the salvation of an immortal soul. How much more important is moral and spiritual truth then than natural? If the more eager students after completing their courses in American colleges, go to England, France, Germany or Palestine to pursue their studies further, how much more effort ought men to give in seeking the salvation of their souls?

This principle is recognized in civil as well as in social and educational life. Many states have compulsory School Laws. The justice of such laws presupposes that it is the duty of children to learn, and that therefore they should be compelled to learn. For it is self-evident that no one should be compelled to do anything which it is not his duty to do. Again, ignorance of the civil law will not excuse a violation of the civil law. If ignorance of the civil law excused its violation, the great majority of criminals would plead ignorance in self-defense, and consequently justice and the conviction of criminals would be next to impossible. As it is, many a criminal has sought to escape from conviction and the punishment due to heinous crimes, by playing the rôle of ignorance and insanity. Even when such efforts have not caused the miscarriage of justice altogether, it has caused long and needless delays. Of course pretended ignorance will be of no avail before the Omniscient Judge.

This principle and custom requiring every violation

of the law to be accounted for, presupposes that it is every man's duty to acquaint himself with all the law, at least with all the law that applies to himself. For the same reason the state requires all the laws to be published immediately upon their enactment. The state recognizes its obligation to give its citizens the opportunity to learn all its laws, though it does not assume the obligation to teach its citizens its laws. Nevertheless it does two things for its citizens that they may have no excuse either for negligence or disobedience. In the first place, it publishes all its laws in order to make them accessible to all its citizens; and in the second place, it gives every citizen an opportunity to obtain an education, and in some instances and states it compels him to seek it, that he may become intelligent concerning his duty.

God follows the same course with His subjects. He puts His laws within the reach of every man, and expects him to learn them, yea, even commands him to learn them. The state thinks it fulfills its obligation to its citizens by putting the laws within the reach of all, and furnishing its citizens with the means, opportunity and preparation for learning them. There its obligation ends. Then the citizen's duty is to learn and faithfully obey all the law that applies to him. God has had His law written and preserved. He has given man brains, means and opportunity to educate himself so that he may learn all his duty. Yea, more, He has commissioned prophets, pastors, evangelists and teachers to teach and explain the law to all the people. Besides, He empowers and illuminates all the various classes of gospel workers to strengthen and help them do

their work well. If men cannot read, they can learn most of the gospel and law simply by listening to the reading and preaching of the word. Some illiterate men have been known to be able to quote more Scripture than many who could read for themselves, because they listened attentively to the reading and preaching of the word. So that men in civilized lands are without excuse.

Not only is knowledge power, as is often said; but ignorance is a dangerous thing. Little knowledge is a dangerous thing, not so much in itself, but because little knowledge is usually partial and one-sided, and often distorted. The wise man said, "Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."—Prov. 11:14; 15:22; 24:6. Many a man has been shot because somebody "did not know it was loaded." Yet men blame that somebody for criminal carelessness, for he ought to have known whether it was loaded or not. For in this is manifest not only a negligence as to knowledge, but also a negligence as to duty. Practical knowledge is far more obligatory upon us than is knowledge merely theoretical, philosophical or fanciful. The highest authorities on civil law teach the same principles. T. W. Dwight, former Professor of Law in Columbia College, New York, writes in Johnson's Encyclopedia on Crime, in which he very tersely and pertinently says, "When acts are characterized by such a degree of negligence or carelessness as to evince a culpable indifference whether wrong is done or not, the wanton disregard of commonly recognized duties is essentially criminal of itself." Again, "The principle is that ignorance of the

law must afford no excuse. If such were not the rule, all laws would be ineffective, for would-be offenders would be likely to abstain from examining their provisions, and thereby secure immunity."

In regard to Luke 12:47f, it might be objected that it would be unjust to condemn or punish a man even a little for not knowing his duty. But the principle underlying it is frequently applied in practical every-day life. For example, suppose a man assigns his servant a task. The servant goes immediately and performs it. That servant's next duty is to inquire what his master will have him do next. To neglect such inquiry, and sit idly down and do nothing, with the excuse that he did not know what to do, would be regarded by many as a sufficient reason for discharging that servant.

The same principle would apply if he knew his duty, and yet did not know how to perform it. He is under obligation to inquire and investigate how to perform it. So it is the duty of every christian having nothing to do to find something to do. For God wants no one to be idle. So it is the bounden duty of every christian when in doubt as to duty, or having no apparent duty, to use all available means to ascertain his duties. Milton said, "They also serve who only stand and wait." But they must wait for something, and not for the indulgence of indolence. They must wait for the revelation of duty, or for the providential openings for the performance of duty, or to learn the best means or manner of its performance. They occasionally stand still too, but it is to "see the salvation of the Lord."

This principle will condemn those people who will not work because they know not what to do, or know not how to do what they already know. God not only wants us to learn His will; He requires us to do so. The advices which God gave to Moses concerning the duties of a king are applicable to all. One of the requirements of a king is to "read therein (that is, in the law) all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them."—Deu. 17:19. Prophets, apostles and Savior all gave exhortations to learn the will of God. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read," said Isaiah, 34:16. Christ repeated the same message to cavilling Jews. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."—John 5:39.

A person is under obligation to seek the light from the standpoint that it is his duty to improve his talents. Both the parable of the talents and the parable to the pounds teach that men are condemned for not improving their talents. Men are under obligation not only to be as good as they can, but also to do all the good they can. People cannot do all the good they can unless they develop their talents. The acquisition of knowledge and personal development are both necessary to enable one to be and do as good as he can.

Then ignorant or bungling work brings more or less reproach on the Church as well as on the individual. This hinders the cause of righteousness. Knowledge is a source of power here as well as elsewhere. If "souls are destroyed for lack of knowledge," —Hos. 4:6, it is the christian's duty to acquire

religious knowledge in order to show others the way of life, that he may save their souls as well as his own.

The absolute necessity of divine knowledge to the attainment of an experience of salvation and a victorious life in those who have reached the age of responsibility, makes its acquisition a positive duty. This is implied in Luke 12:47f, where it is said that, "He that knew not his duty, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." For the same reason, Paul was held accountable for his blasphemy and persecution even before his conversion. However he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief.—I Tim. 1:13. The form of this statement showed that it was sin in spite of the fact that it was done in ignorance, and it needed the mercy and grace of God to excuse and pardon him. Paul did not really know what he was doing; but he ought to have known. It was his duty to act intelligently, and not from mere prejudice. Then common sense and a knowledge of the general principles of right and wrong ought to teach a sane man some things. This was nothing new. It was almost as old as Judaism. Under the old Mosaic law, "If a man committed any of those things which were forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, though he wist it not, yet was he guilty, and should bear his iniquity."—Lev. 5:17; also 4:2, 13, 22, 27. Should ignorance be allowed as an excuse for sin, many a man who loved the world would close his eyes to the light offered to him, or attainable by him, and would refuse to seek or receive more light, and besides would deny the light that he had. As it is, "Many love darkness

rather than light, because their deeds are evil"; and besides "hate the light, neither come to the light lest their deeds should be reproved."—John 3 : 21. On other grounds, the world might live in wilful sin as well as in wilful ignorance, and yet be saved. But God has arranged the plan of salvation so as to place a spur on human effort to learn as well as to do. It also ministers to an all-round development of all the faculties of the mind as well as of the soul.

Another fact and argument for this duty is the form of Christ's prayer for His murderers. He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This statement and its form implied several things. In the first place it implied that they were either wholly or partially ignorant of the significance of their murder of Christ; Second, it implied also that notwithstanding their ignorance their deed was wrong, and needed pardon; Third, it implied that this pardon would be given either wholly or partially, presumably the latter, because of their ignorance of the significance of their own vile deed—at least this ignorance would be taken into acount in reckoning with them on this matter, but that it would not wholly excuse them under any consideration. All of this implies that ignorance only partially excuses sins of any kind in a sane person. If ignorance entirely excused their deeds, their transgressions would need no pardon. As a rule, sinners have four very serious faults: A disposition to refuse to walk in the light they have; a disposition to pervert their light; a tendency to refuse more light; an inclination to refuse to acknowledge the light they have.

IV. All rational men have a conscience, or the light of the moral sense. The goodness and benevolence of God did not leave Himself without any witness entirely, Acts 14:17, but manifested His power and goodness by His providential care of the race. He gave to the race both the light of nature and the light of revelation. All men, both savage and civilized, have the light of nature. Many of the principles of righteousness and justice are manifested in nature. The devout scientist can read God's will in the laws and phenomena of nature. For God showed it unto them. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."—Rom. 1:19f. "For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts."—Rom. 2:14. There are several evidences of this moral light being given in the consciences of men.

(1). The universality of the intuitive knowledge of right and wrong, or the inherent moral sense, which is a part of every sane man's mental and moral furniture, is shown in several ways. It is amply attested by the fact that all nations, including the most heathen nations, have some form of prayer and sacrifice. Christians recognize Christ as the all-sufficient sacrifice offered once for all; but heathens still have their own forms of sacrifice. Paul appeals to this moral sense very often, and made special mention of it in his address to the Athenians. People of all ages, nations,

conditions and attainments, feel a dependence upon a higher power. There was a sort of reaching out after God on the part of all nations as well as on the part of the Athenians. God made them so, "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us." —Acts 17:27. Mingled uncertainty and anxiety, and a desire for more definite religious knowledge is shown by the erection of "an altar to the unknown God." This showed that they not only believed that there might be another God different from any of their own; but that also such a God might be the true one.

(2). The universality of divine knowledge is implied in the moral obligation of all normal men, Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:20; and the liability of all men to judgment and condemnation.—John 5:28f; Rom. 2:22. All men, both the living and the dead, must come to judgment. This implies present responsibility and moral obligation. For it is difficult if not impossible to see how probation could be universal, reasonable and just, without God giving a "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John 1:9.

(3). Moral light is manifest also by the fact that all men, both savage and civilized, have some standard of right and wrong, and show a spirit of approval of all conformity to their standard, and disapproval and condemnation of all nonconformity. The fact that what some think is right others think is entirely wrong, makes no difference in the argument at all. For in either case, there is a standard of right and wrong, no matter whether it is the true one or not. For the fact is simply in there being a standard at all, but not in

its accuracy. The moral nature of the heathen is very evident, and the more evident in the fact that they hold more sacred and tenaciously their religious notions and customs than do many of the people of civilized lands, and the various denominations of the christian Church, who think that their religious views and practices far superior to those of the heathen.

(4). Despite all the differences of opinion in the world, and even in christian lands, all people have some conception of right and wrong, and also have a feeling of obligation to do the right and eschew the wrong. There are a few, but only a few, who declare that there is no such thing as right and wrong. But it is exceedingly doubtful whether these few really believe what they say. For these same persons will often be found blaming one for what they think is his wrong conduct, and commending another for what they regard is his right conduct. Their condemnation and commendation are indicative of their moral sense.

But blame is inconsistent without both moral freedom and moral intelligence. This was the weakness of the old Calvanistic view of necessity. If necessity were true, it would be unjust to blame any one for any thing that he might do. For if "what is to be will be," effort of any kind is both futile and foolish. If so, a man could not do any more or better than he does; neither can he do the opposite of, nor different from, what he does. Yet on the same theory, it would be unjust to condemn blame, for blame itself would then be necessitated.

(5). Opinions as to what is right and what is

wrong may be both varied and contradictory; yet these opinions and their concomitant standards still exist. All the world recognizes these standards, and appeals to them. Even if such standards are not right, the world is better off with them than they are without them, for several reasons. They are an indication of the struggle of the human mind and heart after truth and right. Whether they are true or not, they serve as a working hypothesis. They serve as a moral straightedge by which to test other views and to investigate moral questions by applying these principles thereto. Wrong theories will be found to fail in practice; while the application of good and wise ones will bring success. A man is under obligation to do two things; he should walk in all the light he has, and should use all possible means to obtain more light. When any duty or question is impressed upon a man, it is his duty to learn all its bearings, applications and obligations.

(6). All sane men have more or less moral knowledge intuitively; and consequently they are under some obligation. Every normal man who has reached the years of accountability, has enough light to start out in life with. It is unreasonable and unjust to require a duty of any one who knows it not, and has had neither ability nor opportunity to know. Sometimes Satan tempts people by making them think that they are under obligation to perform duties of which they know not, and cannot know. Were either of these cases true, God would be unjust This temptation charges God with requiring man to do more than he can do or know. I know of a man who for months

was seeking entire sanctification, and failed to find it. The reason was because for a long time Satan tempted him to believe that God would never sanctify him till he did something of which he knew not and could not know, and that God would not reveal it to him. This hindered him for months. Finally he reasoned with himself thus: That God could not justly require a man to do anything that he could not do, or could not know, nor ascertain. This relieved him of the temptation, and he soon got the victory, and received an experience brighter and better than he had ever dreamed of. This clearly shows that the faithful application of these principles will help a man in many of the religious difficulties of life and experience.

CHAPTER II.

Necessity and Advantage of Spiritual Knowledge.

IF SPIRITUAL knowledge is absolutely essential to the christian life in all its progress, phases and degrees, then spiritual knowledge must be of inestimable value to every human soul. Its possession is fraught with momentous results. To know aright is life eternal. The lack of all spiritual knowledge is spiritual death itself. No one can afford to be without it. And upon it our eternal destiny depends. Its value and importance are estimated and emphasized by the various things which are said about it in the sacred Scriptures.

I. If duty depends upon knowledge, and is in proportion to knowledge, and if even the man who knows not his duty is punished because he knows it not, and neglects or refuses to learn it, many souls will be lost for lack of it; for the reason that so many neglect to search the Scriptures that they may find the way of eternal life. Some fail to find eternal life because they are destitute of spiritual wisdom. Still others lose what they have previously gained. Many avoid or neglect the acquisition of spiritual knowledge that they may the better evade the performance of their religious duties, and not be continually conscious of their own obligations, or of their deviations from duty. Moral truth present to the mind continually prompts one to the performance of duty, or rebukes him for the neglect thereof.

There are numerous arguments and passages which show that many people backslide because of a lack of the knowledge of moral truth. Even as early as the days of Isaiah, it was said, "My people have gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge."—Isa. 5:13. This miserable condition of Israel was said to be, because "my people doth not consider."—1:3. So the Bible teaches that spiritual ignorance and its results are both the people's own fault. The same doctrine was taught by the prophet Hosea, who said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."—4:6. This was not God's fault. Neither was it his prophet's fault. It was the fault of the people who neglected or rejected knowledge. In this case it was not negligence, but sheer rebellion. For God said through the mouth of the same inspired prophet, and immediately following, "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee."—Hos. 4:6.

It is also very evident from reason and Scripture, observation and experience, that people will suffer not only in this world, but also in the world to come, because of their lack of spiritual knowledge. Christ said with great seriousness and much sadness that Jerusalem would be totally destroyed, because "it knew not the time of its visitation."—Luke 19:44. Recognizing the great need of a knowledge of spiritual things, Paul had a pressing reason to repeat time and again, "Brethren, I would not have you ignorant."—I Cor. 10:1; 12:1; II Cor. 1:8; Rom. 1:13. Christ had the same purpose for giving the command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."—Mat. 28:19. Christ also reproved the scribes and Pharisees, because

they could discern the face of the sky, and could not discern the signs of the times.—Mat. 12 : 38-42 ; 16 : 1-5 ; Luke 11 : 29-32 ; 12 : 54-57. This shows too, that material knowledge will not avail, and also that a man may be shrewd and far-sighted in the affairs of everyday life, and still be woefully lacking in spiritual discernment.

II. Many have testified that they sought the Lord, and failed to find him because they did not understand. Of course sometimes people fail of receiving eternal life because of a failure to pay the required price in a full repentance and consecration. But the fact that many, without any apparent or confessed increase of either repentance or consecration, but rather because of an increase of light and truth, have gotten into the light of an experience, shows that it was the instruction and inspiration for more faith rather than a warning for a more thorough repentance that gave the victory. Furthermore, this is more fully shown by the fact that it was often preaching almost wholly along the lines of instruction, faith and the promises that gave the victory to such seekers. It naturally takes light to find the way. If the blind lead the blind both will fall into the ditch.—Mat. 15 : 14.

The same truth is taught concerning the backsliding of people through ignorance. It is proverbial that young converts need teaching to establish them in the christian life. Moral and spiritual truth is the staff by which young converts walk to keep them from falling. This is emphasized by the fact that many young converts are enabled to stand after renewed efforts, without making any further or fuller repent-

ance or consecration than they made at first. It was a stronger and steadier faith because of more light rather than fuller repentance and consecration on account of more faithful warnings. Young converts also testify that they backslid over little difficulties when they need not, if they had only understood. But fuller instruction reclaims them, and enables them to stand when they are reclaimed.

The Scriptures teach repeatedly that knowledge helps the seeker to obtain salvation. Nearly every seeker that came to Christ was saved immediately, because Christ could show him so clear and plain that every such person could grasp salvation by faith easily and quickly. Christ exhorted the Jews to "Search the Scriptures," that they may know and recognize Him as "the way, the truth and the life."—John 5:38; 14:6. Paul exhorted Timothy to hold fast to the Holy Scriptures, because they were "able to make him wise unto salvation."—I Tim. 3:14f; Prov. 2:11f.

III. A thorough Scriptural knowledge clears the way of most, if not of all, of one's religious difficulties. John the Baptist quoted the prophet's command to "Prepare the way of the Lord, and make His paths straight." Mat. 3:3; Isa. 40:3. This is good advice for both preacher and penitent. Here it is directed mostly if not wholly to the seekers of salvation under John's preaching. Christ's signal success with seekers of salvation was due to the fact that He always knew what it was in their way, and told them what it was, and how to remove it. The saying of Christ, "Roll ye away the stone," was not directed to such things, but is very often aptly and figuratively so ap-

plied. Most of the teachings of the law, prophets and apostles was for the sole purpose of clearing away men's moral and spiritual difficulties.

IV. Not only does knowledge facilitate the attainment of savlation, knowledge also furnishes the strongest incentives to seek salvation. Who that knows the possibilities of divine grace in redeeming, developing, fashioning and glorifying the human soul; who that knows the glory that shall be revealed in and to saints in heaven, the bliss of the purified, the sweetness of communion with the spirits of just men made perfect; who that realizes the intensity and immensity of divine love, the import and full meaning of the self-sacrificing sympathy of Christ, and the possibility of fully appropriating both to one's own self, but feels a yearning to become more Christlike, and to attain to the glory and association of the blood-washed throng?

Then on the other hand, who that knows the pains and pangs of perishing souls, the woeful wails and loud lamentations of the lost; who that knows the horrors of hell, and the dark despair of the doomed, but instinctively feels a desire to avoid them one's self, and to save others from suffering them too? This is so true that evangelists always hold up the glory and happiness of the redeemed, the love and sacrifice of Christ, and the horrors of hell and the dark despair and dreadful doom of the damned, to influence sinners to turn to God and to seek salvation. Moreover that is just the reason for the more faithful preaching of the word of God during revivals, and for the distribution of telling tracts, and for the many personal

conversations and Bible readings. These ministrations must not only be multiplied, but they must be on the lines of faithfulness, law, warning and retribution, to awaken sleeping souls. These are for the very purpose of arousing an increased interest in sinners concerning their own souls' salvation. Nearly all conversions have been secured by the faithful application of the word of God as well as by prayer.

V. Bible knowledge is also a great help in spiritual growth. Peter exhorted his readers to lay aside all their besetting sins, and then "as new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby." I Pet. 2:2. Those who read the Bible most, generally grow most in grace. Those who neglect to read it, if they can, never grow in grace very much, if any. But real intelligent prayer is only a pleading of the promises learned. The growth in grace which christians make during special revival services, is due in part to renewed zeal, to increased expectations, to more frequent and earnest prayer, to greater effort for the salvation of souls. But among these things, is found the especial illumination that comes from hearing the gospel preached more frequently and faithfully, a more earnest personal study of the word of God, and a closer observation of the work of God in the souls of men. The one who does his whole duty must grow in knowledge as well as in grace.

Then again, Suppose that a person could grow in grace without growing in knowledge; good judgment, or the proper application of knowledge, would be necessary to direct one's growth and conduct, so as not

to frustrate the very end designed. Therefore Peter very wisely exhorts his readers, "to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." II Pet. 3:18. Ignorant or bungling work sometimes furnishes a lever for Satan's use to hinder and discourage the people of God. Sometimes the ignorant fanaticism of over-zealous people causes them to backslide altogether. People who have backslidden from religious fanaticism usually swing to the other extreme and go over into skepticism.

VI. Bible knowledge also helps in christian work. No one feels the need of divine wisdom more than does the christian worker. For every christian worker is about half the time at his wits' end to know what is the best thing to do. In his pastoral epistles, Paul quite frequently adverts to this point. He told Timothy that the Scriptures are not only "able to make us wise unto salvation," but also that "they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." They can also "furnish a man unto all good works."—II Tim. 3:14-17. In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul had exhorted him along the same line also. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."—I Tim. 4:16f. He makes it clear and emphasizes it, that the salvation of both himself and his hearers depends upon a thorough working knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

Many stumble and fall, too, on the very threshold of the christian life because they are not properly in-

structed. The fact is, many who seek salvation never get into the kingdom at all because no one clearly shows them the way. The most progressive christian workers are usually those who read the most. The most helpful and successful christian workers are those who understand their Bibles best. There is now more than ever before a demand for intelligent and skilled workers in the vineyard of the Lord. The minister is not always now as formerly head and shoulders above his parishioners. He now has professional men of all classes as hearers. It is true now more than ever that the most intelligent people of the community are the Church-going people. And be it said, too, that church-going has helped to make them so. There are occasionally exceptional cases, but the fact still remains that the most intelligent men and women of the community are church-goers.

People, too, are more critical than ever before. If special training were necessary in the time of Christ when most of the people were illiterate, when many of the Jews could neither read nor write, it is much more necessary now. Despite the fact that nearly every one of Christ's disciples was a business man of good common sense, and experience besides, he kept them under His own pedagogical instruction for three years. He also gave them special instruction immediately before he sent out the twelve and the seventy on their short missionary tour. This training and instruction he seemed to think was absolutely necessary to their success, and happiness, too. His attitude toward the proper training of his workers is the more evident when we begin to notice how much of His teaching

was directed to His disciples only. The sermon on the mount, the ordination sermon, the parables of the kingdom, the second coming and the destruction of Jerusalem, and the sermon in the upper room, were all addressed only to His disciples. To close up with, He said, that there was still more that He desired to tell them, but they were not yet able to bear it, but promised that the Holy Spirit should be given to instruct them.

CHAPTER III.

Sources of Spiritual Knowledge.

THE KNOWLEDGE of what is right and what is wrong comes from different sources. But knowledge is knowledge, just as truth is truth, whencesoever it comes. We have the variable or human sources of the knowledge of truth, and we have also the invariable or the divine sources. Under the human or variable sources of truth, we have our own example, or personal experience, and the example of others. One might be called the truth derived from personal experience, and the other truth derived from observation. One is subjective, and the other is objective. Under this head may also come as sources in a sort of way, the reason and also the conscience. Under the second head of the divine or invariable sources we have two branches, and we might also say three: namely, the word of truth, and the Spirit of truth. To these a third may be very aptly added, because if properly studied it is a means and source of learning many divine truths, some of which are moral and suggestive of spiritual things. This is physical nature, or the works of truth. The first and last of these is objective, and the second is subjective. All three are divine, invariable and unquestionable.

I. We will discuss first the human and variable sources. These are present and patent to all, and all the time, too. The first to be discussed is the experi-

ence of truth. Everybody may and does learn from personal experience. Such truth is sure and sacred to the one who has it. But God generally deals with a man according to the personal equation and his moral needs. For this reason He may deal with one in a different way from that in which He deals with another. And so He may deal with one in almost the very opposite way that He may deal with another. This is because they lean in opposite directions, and are tempted in different ways as well as degrees. One may be tempted to inordinate love, and another to inordinate hate. So that one's experience may not be the standard for another; though a great many want to make their own experience of truth to be the standard for every one else.

But notwithstanding the misuse and faults of the experience of truth, men must learn through experience many of the things which God wants to teach them. Some things can never be learned in any other way, and if men refuse to learn such things by experience, they will never know them at all. One may know his duty, and not think of it; that is, it may never occur to him. Another might know his duty if he only considered what would be required of him under some circumstances. But others still must be taught both by precept and example what is right and what is wrong. Then there are yet others who scarcely grasp their moral obligation in any of these ways. Their sense of duty must be wrought into them by the rough and heavy hand of experience. The old saying is true in some instances, that experience is a dear teacher, but fools will learn from no other.

The prodigal son knew his duty before he left his father's house. But never before did he realize his duty as he did when he sat down one day in the swine-field, and reviewed his past life, and considered his present condition. When he recalled his disobedience and disrespect to his kind old father, his sinfulness when and since he left home; his present wretchedness brought upon himself by his own sins; his hopelessness and almost helplessness as long a he remained away from his father's house; then he saw his own sins and sinfulness as never before, and confessed them. "He came to himself." The truth that righteousness is in a sense its own reward, that the wages of sin is death, and that sin is very hateful to God, seemed clearer to him than ever before. Before this, sin did not appear to him to be very sinful or hateful, nor did he believe that there was very much difference between right and wrong, and their respective rewards. **But after** his sad experience and destitution in a strange land, it is not a matter of belief one way or the other; he now knows that there is a difference, and a great one, too. One may reject his duty, or he may only neglect or doubt it. The prodigal son may have done both. Now he does neither.—Luke 15:1-20.

The same facts and principles were true in regard to Judas Iscariot. He seemed utterly devoid of any conscientious scruples concerning the betrayal of Jesus. Even though Christ specifically declared to him his purpose to commit the act, its heinousness, and its terrible reward, he was not deterred from its commission for a single moment. He did not hesitate even to interrupt the private devotions of Christ to perpe-

trate his villainy. Neither had he any scruples against inflicting his malice upon Christ under the guise of warmest friendship. He seemed to realize very little the turpitude of treason against a true friend, "the friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

But when he learned that Christ was unjustly condemned to a cruel death, his treachery appeared in a light very different from what it ever had before. Cruelty and injustice are so contrary to nature and righteousness, that a reaction often follows even in the most malicious and degraded. The sight of the sad sufferings of Christ so cruelly and unjustly inflicted upon Him by others, wrung from Judas a confession of sin, and acknowledgment of the innocence of Jesus, and an effort to make reparation for his wrong, and finally led to his suicide. All of Judas's own reasonings, and all of Christ's words of wisdom and warning never enlightened Judas in some of the principles of justice and righteousness as much as did his experience of the last few hours.—Mat. 27: 1-6.

As for Peter's case, not even his own protestations of fidelity, nor even his denial of any thought or intention of wavering in integrity on his part, nor Christ's forewarning him of his temporary apostasy, cowardice, dishonesty and profanity, were enough to check Peter in his treachery and sin. But after he had woefully backslidden, and repeatedly denied Christ, the crowing of the cock, and the simple chiding glance of Christ reminded him of broken vows of fidelity.—Mat. 26: 69-75; Mk. 14: 66-72; Luke 22: 54-62. His own consciousness of wrong was heightened by Christ's look of grief and reproach.—Luke 22: 61.

In all of these cases there is mostly the knowledge that comes from experience. In each case, the men were wiser, and no doubt better after their experience. The prodigal repented, confessed and reformed. Judas repented, confessed, and made reparation, but lacked saving faith in Christ. Here as elsewhere the sorrow of the world without true repentance and trusting faith, worketh death. So Judas, being without faith and hope, committed suicide. Peter repented, wept, wavered, reformed and was reclaimed; and became faithful and loyal unto death, and was a martyr for Jesus' sake. Knowledge derived from bitter experience bore some good fruit in each case. Repentance and reformation was partial in the case of Judas, and wrought confession and restitution. In the cases of Peter and the prodigal son, repentance and reformation were both thorough, and accomplished all that repentance is expected to accomplish.

II. The next source of truth is the example of others. In each of the above cases the mind was enlightened, and the soul convicted by a knowledge gained from personal experience. But men learn from the experience of others as well as from their own. The fact is, there is a type of men who learn most of what they know in religious things as well as in the things of everyday life by simply observing others. They learn truth and wisdom by observing the conduct, and hearing the conversation of others, and seeing the consequences of the one, and the bearings and implications of the other. This is enlightenment by the example of the truth. Pilate's knowledge and conviction of truth, duty and justice, were much clari-

fied and deepened by the conduct and conversation of Christ at His trial.—Mat. 27:11-24. Pilate was constrained to marvel at His mingled majesty and meekness, and at His sweet and happy combination of dignity and humility. So impressed was Pilate that he wanted to release Christ and called Him a just person. —Mark 15:9-14.

The Roman Centurion, who no doubt had witnessed many another execution, and performed them, too, was seriously impressed by this one. He was constrained to cry out, "Certainly this was a righteous man."—Luke 23:47; and also to declare, "Truly this was the Son of God."—Mat. 27:54. One of the thieves also, after abusing Christ for awhile—Mat. 27:44; Luke 23:32; was convinced by His spirit and manner, that He was a righteous man, and seemingly more than a man, and sought His mercy.—Luke 23:41f. Even though the rulers of the Jews were malicious, jealous and prejudiced, they were impressed by the dignity of demeanor, and nobility of character, manifested by Peter and John, and resolved to deal leniently with them after their examination.—Acts 4:13-27. Gamaliel also, a doctor of the law, was induced in the same way to make a sort of negative defense of them.—Acts 5:34ff.

In each of these cases there is manifest a clearer (and stronger) knowledge of duty, and as one result, an apparently stronger desire to be and to do better. This was all wrought in them by their observing a good example of religious truth. Paul recognized this truth, and appealed to it, when he advised Timothy "to take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue

in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."—I Tim. 4:16. Christ also declared in the sermon on the mount, that Scripture truth embodied in the lives of christian people was a potent factor for good, and for leading others to Christ. —Mat. 5:13-16. In the same connection he asserted that this was one of the purposes of christians in the world, and that the world was to be both saved and preserved by them. So He exhorts them; "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." He insisted that His people were "the salt of the earth," and in figure declared that if the world cannot be saved and preserved by the light, life and teachings of christians, there is no hope for it.

Paul claimed that the truths of the gospel which he preached could be read in the lives of many of the Corinthian brethren, and that he needed no other recommendation to them except character of his converts. "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men."—II Cor. 3:1-3. People who do not read their Bibles, are not only willing, but very anxious to read professing christians. So that as has been frequently said, christians are walking Bibles of christianity, or are living libels on christianity. The world is very anxious to see whether lives of professing christians tally with their teaching. If it does, they notice it. If it does not, they soon detect it. When the rulers of the Jews "saw the boldness of Peter and John—they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."—Acts 4:13.

Christ came into the world for the very purpose of

giving to the world a perfect example of the embodiment of the truth in living form. You cannot tell a man how to make a certain tint or color; neither can you describe a tone of voice to him, or the fragrance or odor of a flower, or the flavor of fruit. So there are some things in the spiritual realm which cannot be explained nor described; they can only be demonstrated or experienced. So Christ came to demonstrate to humanity the great truths of the spiritual realm. After seeing Christ in the various trying circumstances of life, we can see now how spiritual truths look when acted out in daily life. So John, the nearest approach to Christliness in his day, exhorted men to walk even as Christ walked. Paul also said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." Nothing teaches men so clearly the real truths of the gospel, and presses conviction home so strongly on men's hearts and consciences, as does righteous living. All words of wisdom and eloquence fail if the speaker's life does not tally with them. But if they do so tally, they fasten the words as nails in a sure place. There are many who care but little or nothing for the arguments and eloquence of men, who nevertheless are won to Christ by observing the living examples of integrity, fidelity and piety.

III. The word of God is the third source of moral truth. We cannot always see ourselves as others see us, for we are usually biassed by our own peculiar views and feelings. We also read our own actions in the light of our feelings and desires of which we are conscious, and frequently overlook the real motive and purpose of our conduct. Then again, we continually misjudge other people because we see only a small seg-

ment of their lives, only a few of their actions, and none of their real thoughts and feelings, except as we may chance to read them through their words and deeds, which may or may not be in harmony with their thoughts and feelings. Then both ourselves and others are more or less variable. Why, we cannot always tell; neither do we always recognize the fact. Others deceive us both intentionally and unintentionally; but we also deceive ourselves. So we need a standard which is apart from ourselves and others, and is also unvarying. This standard is found in the word of God, "which liveth and abideth forever," "not one jot or tittle of which shall fail till all be fulfilled."—I Pet. 1:23; Mat. 5:18. We need both a subjective and an objective standard. The subjective standards may fail or vary; and the objective standard may not always be present; and if present, the needed direction may not always be found. So we need the one to supplement the other. And so God gives both to us.

So by far the largest place is given to the Scriptures as a means of enlightenment in the way of life, and to direct concerning duty. When the Jews were cavilling about truth and duty, John 5:16, Jesus gave them the testimony of His Father and of John the Baptist, to His own person, work and character. He closed His exhortation by advising them to "search the Scriptures," 5:39, for they, too, testified of Him.—5:46ff.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the word, which wrought conviction, repentance, and regeneration in the hearts of hundreds of his hearers. The saving, sanctifying faith of christians is also wrought by the hearing of the word.—Acts 4:4; Rom. 10:13f.

The conviction of the rulers, who were trying Peter and John, were caused chiefly by the words of the Apostles, and by the Scriptures which they quoted. It was the power of the gospel that led the Apostles to make the study and preaching of the word with prayer their chief business, and to refuse to let even the temporal affairs of the Church interfere with it. Their bold and Spirit-fraught preaching of the word often restrained their persecutors—Acts 4:19ff, as well as provoked their wrath—7:54.

The preaching of the word is so important that the Lord called Peter all the way from Joppa to Cæsarea to tell Cornelius how to be saved.—Acts 10:6. Cornelius recognized that the word was divinely commanded and sent.—10:33. He confessed that the words which Peter was to speak were to be such, "whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."—11:14. The Holy Ghost was given even while he was preaching the word, as a seal of the word, and of their faith.—10:44; 11:15. Here the word was declared to be a means of salvation. In Cornelius and his household were literally fulfilled the words of James 1:18, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth," and of I Pet. 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." The promises of the word are said to be given "that we may be partakers of the divine nature."—II Pet. 1:4.

For these reasons commands are given repeatedly to preach the word.—Mat. 28:19f; I Tim. 6:14; II Tim. 4:2. Being saved is called "coming unto the knowledge of the truth."—II Tim. 2:25f. The work

which the word performs in a man is called "making him wise unto salvation."—II Tim. 3:15.

The divine side of the work is termed, "giving repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth."—II Tim. 2:25f; and making him "free indeed."—John 8:32; Acts 28:28-31. It was the preaching of the word by Paul that convicted Felix of sin, and made him tremble. Acts 24:25, and extorted a confession from king Agrippa.—26:27f. The mere fact, too, that in numerous instances in the New Testament, the word was preached as the principal means of convicting men of sin, and of leading them to repentance and conversion, shows its recognized relation to conversion.

The word may be either written or spoken. Truth is truth, no matter whether seen or heard, or whether written or spoken. It may be in either sacred or secular print. It may be in tract or motto, paper or book. It may come in kindness or in cursing. Yet its authority is just the same. Its ultimate source is divine no matter whether the messenger is sage or seer, saint or sinner, ignorant or learned, pious or profane. When we are resisting the truth, we are fighting against God, and not against man, and we will surely suffer for it.

Truth written or printed is usually more critical, logical and accurate than is spoken truth, having had the advantages of repeated examination and revision, and of more deliberation, testing, and polishing. At the same time it may have a more studied, stately and precise expression. Written truth has another advantage. The reader has the opportunity for rereading, which enables him to arrive more nearly at the exact truth, not only for getting the precise mean-

ing of the author, but also for forming his own judgment of the matter.

But one is under obligation to receive truth when spoken as well as when written. There is a sort of feeling among some people, especially among the uneducated or those only partially educated, that anything found in print is authoritative and accurate. But the authority of truth does not depend upon the manner of its presentation, but upon the fact of its truthfulness. In the golden days of Judaism, and in the early days of christianity, but few could read or write. And so Scriptural truth must necessarily pass from mouth to mouth, and nearly all of divine truth was learned from conversation and from preaching. Even now much of Scripture teaching is learned in the same way. The best and principal preservation of Scripture is found in writing and in print. But its reception and usual presentation is through spoken language.

The benefits derived from Class-Meeting are twofold: namely, information and inspiration. As a rule more inspiration is received from personal contact and conversation. Bacon also said that of ten things which he knew, nine he learned in conversation. Herein lies the obligation of christian conference, on account of its being the medium of communication of spiritual knowledge. Possibly as much spiritual truth is learned in christian conference as in preaching. Yet the latter may be more logical and learned. So important is the hearing of the truth that a woe is pronounced upon those who will not hear it. Nevertheless the old prophet was commanded to speak unto men, "whether they will hear or whether they will

forbear."—Ezek. 3:11. God not only commands His ministers to preach the truth; he also commands others to hear the truth. More than once Christ said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—Mat. 13:9; Mk. 4:9. Then there seems to be more inspiration to faith in hearing a sermon than there is in reading it. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But how will they hear without a preacher?"—Rom. 10:14-17.

The greatest numbers of trophies of divine grace are won through preaching. There are more people saved by preaching than by any other one means. All denominations use this means, no matter how much they differ in their methods of preaching, or in other things. And more people seem called to that line of christian work than to any other. Again, more people attribute their salvation and growth in grace to the preaching of the word than to any other one thing. Then, too, the greater displays of divine power are given under preaching of the word than in any other form of christian work.

IV. The Spirit Himself is another source of truth. The Holy Spirit is called the Illuminator of the truth and of the mind. This is very true; for nothing else can illuminate a man's moral sense. All else fails without His assistance. Our disposition not only inclines us to learn anything, but it also enhances our ability. It is hard for a man to learn what he hates. The love of nature is almost a necessity for a man who wants to be a naturalist. One cannot well appreciate botany, or learn it unless he loves flowers. The fact is, a man does not care to learn botany if he does not

love flowers. A man wants to learn what he loves. And a man can usually learn what he loves, too.

The same law holds in the social and spiritual world. It is said that one cannot well or easily understand another unless he loves him. No one can usually understand a child like its mother, and the strength of a mother's love is proverbial. So it is in our relation to, and understanding of, God. We cannot know God unless we love Him. Neither do we want to know Him unless we love Him. Love furnishes us the disposition, and also enhances our ability, to learn and know God as it does to learn and know material things. And "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."—Rom. 5:5. Love feels, sees and knows because love appreciates and sympathizes. Body touches body; mind touches mind; but it takes love to touch the inner life and spirit. As spiritual things are spiritually discerned, so love perceives the reality and character of peoples' emotions. When we have the Spirit of God, we love what He loves, and hate what He hates. The Spirit of God gives us an intuitive insight into the will of God, by making our emotions vibrate in harmony with His own. No one is so sensitive to the desires and affections, enjoyments and sufferings, of another as is the man who loves him. After a man is truly converted to God, he finds himself naturally gravitating toward some things, and avoiding others. He may very properly suppose that such movements and dispositions of his soul either toward or from such things to be indicative of God's will in regard to them. "We know that we have passed from death unto life be-

cause we love the brethren."—I John 3:14. And "every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him."—5:1.

But what does the Spirit teach? He does not supersede all necessity for the Bible, nor of using our best judgment in investigating the various practical problems of life. But He illuminates our minds, and opens up the meaning and significance of the word to us, and also guides and strengthens our minds when we are investigating the moral phases of the practical problems of life. God always requires us to use what means we have, not only the facts and external data, but also the common sense which we have in drawing our conclusions.

The first thing which the Spirit gives us is not new truth, but a proper understanding and application of the old. Old truth is of no benefit to us, unless understood and applied. So Christ said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—John 14:26. This saying accounts for two facts in our christian experience. Occasionally truths which have long been forgotten come to our minds unexpectedly, and without any effort or bidding, when we are teaching, exhorting or warning others, or when we ourselves are in sore need of direction, comfort or encouragement. Proverbs and precepts, verses and texts, which heretofore we could not recall if we tried, now come unexpected and unbidden. This is the Holy Spirit bringing it to our remembrance. He does not bring it all the time,

but only when we need it; just the same as He has promised to help us in every time of need. At other times we do not need it. In the second place He illuminates the Scripture to us. He does this also when it is really needed. At other times it would not be noticed so much nor appreciated. Sometimes a text never before understood will be flashed upon our souls with a clearness, force and pertinence inexplicable to us, except on the supposition that it is the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

(1). No wonder the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter. He is a helper indeed. Most people realize their own sinfulness, but they cannot see where the root of the trouble is. But the Holy Spirit shows that it is a lack of a proper faith. "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me."—John 16:8f. The great sin of the world is the rejection of Jesus Christ as the only real and sufficient Savior. Most people seem to think that sin is in the various kinds of forbidden acts which transgress the divine law. No, it is something worse than that. It is in the base ingratitude which neglects and rejects the best of benefactors. These isolated acts are just the isolated manifestations of the inward attitude. The tree is always greater than the fruit it bears, just as the cause is always greater than the effect. The word of God reveals the real status of men's thoughts, words and deeds. But the Spirit reveals the things of the Spirit: the spirit of sin,—which is unbelief; and the cure for sin,—which is Jesus Christ the only Savior from sin.

(2) The Spirit not only reveals to us what we are, and what we need, but also what we ought to say and do in the perplexing circumstances of life. Often we are beset by bitter foes, trying circumstances, perplexing views, and contrary contentions, so that we know not which way to turn. Of course in such cases it is difficult to determine what is best to do or to say. Then sometimes enemies will seek to turn our every word and deed, no matter how good and kind, into a reflection against us. When Christ preached His ordination sermon to His disciples, He exhorted them not to worry nor be anxious at such times as to what one should say, "for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."—Mat. 10:20. This means divine guidance not only in temporal things, and in regards to the ethics of the many moral questions of the day; but also in regard to questions of prudence and discretion.

(3). Another very important work of the Spirit is to reveal Christ to the soul. Of course this must naturally and logically, as well as historically, follow saving truth. We must not only have a knowledge of sin, and of ourselves as sinners, but also of Christ as the Savior of men from sin. So Christ plainly sets forth this important function of the Holy Spirit, "When He, 'which is the Holy Ghost,' is come—He shall testify of me."—John 14:26; 15:26. It is very easy to realize our sinfulness, though it is not easy to realize that our unbelief is the root of our sins. But it is not difficult to realize that Christ is our only and sufficient

Savior, when we are pressed into the dust by the burden of our sins, or of our sinfulness either. Christ must be very real, as well as very essential to the faith of the soul, before it can appropriate Him for its own salvation. So the same Spirit which reveals unto us the awful sin of unbelief, also reveals to us our only Savior from all sin, even Jesus Christ.

(4). Conscience, or man's moral monitor, furnishes him with the general principles of moral truth. In a sense it is a discerner of truth, too. Conscience has three functions, which define what it is. It gives one a general sense of right and wrong; it impels him toward the right, and warns him from the wrong; and after any moral act, it approves the right and condemns the wrong. Every normal man is born with an innate sense of right and wrong. No matter what may be the temperament or disposition, education or attainments, environment or moral state, etc., of any normal man, he feels this sense of moral discrimination, that some things are right and that others are wrong. Nothing but partial or total idiocy or lunacy seems to efface that. Even men in an acknowledged state of reprobacy still show that they have a clear moral sense; and sometimes it seems to be clearer and stronger in them than in many of those who have not yet crossed the dead line. The old saying that there is honor even among thieves, shows that even among the criminal classes there are ideals of right and wrong. Their standards do not always correspond with ours; but they have them just the same. What one may regard as right, another may think is entirely wrong, and vice versa. There is no doubt

that every intelligent person has that faculty of moral discrimination.

The conscience is not exactly a source of moral truth. Yet this sense of right and wrong is a part of every man's mental and moral capital. It is not acquired, but it is original. It is molded by circumstances, but it is not the creature of circumstances. Education is not responsible for the fact of moral discrimination, but for its character. Conscience deals mostly with general principles, not so much with specific acts, nor with isolated facts. In the field of general principles, or of immutable morality, its decision is accurate and final. In the region of specific acts in the various relations and conditions of life, which is the region of mutable morality, its decisions are modified by the moral condition, environment, education and peculiar notions of the person. Conditions and causes, both external and internal, moral and physical, may modify the decisions and dictates of the conscience; but they can never eliminate it entirely. It protests against wrong in spite of our rebellion and debates with it. It brings in its decisions in spite of all our objections.

(5). Paul says that we learn some things from nature. "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead."—Rom. 1:20. This is simply the laws of nature, and the teachings of natural religion. People who have the light of nature are under obligation to walk according to its light, and to be judged accordingly. "For as many as have sinned without the

law shall also perish without law. For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness; and their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."—Rom. 2:12-15.

So the heathen, who have never heard the gospel, nor heard of it either, and have never been enlightened by education or civilization, have nevertheless the light and promptings of the conscience. It is not exactly a source of light, but is rather a reflector of the "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John 1:9. Dr. Daniel Steele, who is acknowledged to be an able and accurate writer on the various phases of spiritual truth, says, "Among the self-evident truths with which the human mind is originally furnished is the distinction between right and wrong. The power to discover this distinction inheres in every sane mind." He with others also thinks, "that the moral intuitions, immutable and invariable, are the voice of the divine Spirit immanent in all men, irrespective of regeneration and the gracious indwelling of the Spirit. There is a sense in which the Spirit of God is upholding nature. Men are not conscious of this substratum of their being, before their conscious reception of the Holy Spirit."

VII. Then reason teaches men some things. When men observe certain lines of conduct, and see them naturally and surely result in something injurious, they almost certainly and rightly judge that such things are wrong. Results, good or evil, are really

only God's judgments on certain acts or courses of conduct. Their reason as well as their moral sense declares that such things are right or wrong, according as the results are good or evil. Civil law also recognizes this principle when it permits or forbids the same act according as it helps or injures another man or his property or not. The character of the act and its legality are decided by the character of the results. Divine law makes many of its decisions too, according to the results of the deeds.

Then again, any act springing from an ill-feeling of any kind, reason decides most certainly to be evil, no matter whether its results are intended or not. So reason decides that both the purpose and the results indicate the character of the act or the course of conduct. Things which are bad in spirit, purpose or results are wrong; and the things which are good in spirit, purpose or results are right. In the same way, men can reason some things out of the laws of nature. There they can see God's will in the laws and phenomena of nature. The certainty of God's natural laws indicate that His character is invariably just and upright. Kindness and affection, and especially parental affection in animals, show God's will in such matters. Men can reason from natural laws to God's spiritual laws; for God gave them both.

CHAPTER IV.

Methods of Obtaining Spiritual Knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE of duty is obtained by two general methods. One depends more or less upon our own will and effort, and the other does not. In the reception of knowledge we may be either active or passive. We may obtain knowledge, or arrive at conclusions, after more or less effort. We may search for knowledge, or we may arrive at conclusions somewhat intuitively. Knowledge may come suddenly and unexpectedly, or it may dawn upon us gradually after long effort and waiting. It may be received with great hesitation and reluctance on our part, because of its unwelcomeness, or we may receive it with open mind and heart and with much joy after great effort and anxiety. We may find knowledge, or knowledge may find us. We may search for knowledge, or knowledge may search for us, as well as search us. We hold opinions, but our convictions hold us, whether we will or not. They are like old Banquo's ghost—they will not down. Opinions may be changed frequently, and are very often changed, and in fact, they are continually changing. We may and frequently do make long and tedious investigations to obtain knowledge; or it may be thrust upon us against our will. It is not only our duty to receive all the light we can get that is offered to us; but we ought earnestly to seek all we can.

I. We get much of our knowledge without our seeking for it. God has graciously arranged this world so that we cannot but learn many things. In early life everything is taught us or learned by observation or experiment. Natural light is diffusive. The sun cannot shine around the corners. Nevertheless, the light gets around the corners somehow. Much of our health, pleasure and usefulness is due to this fact. Otherwise shade and shadows would be the veriest darkness; and there would be no light except the great glare of noon-day brightness. And further, the line between light and darkness would also be the line of demarcation between heat and cold. The shades and degrees between light and darkness, heat and cold, are a great protection as well as comfort to us. Moral and spiritual light is very much like natural light. A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid. Spiritual light will shine. God in mercy has left us without any excuse. The various shades and degrees of light are also a comfort and protection to us. They furnish means for growth without despair, and encourage us to go on.

(a). There are two main avenues by which light enters the soul. These are the intellectual and the spiritual. The spiritual avenue is the conscience. Conscience is a sense of right and wrong. To be more explicit, it is a sense of the rightness of right, and the wrongness of wrong. This moral discrimination is light of itself. This innate sense of right, truth, duty, religion and God is a part of the heritage of every sane man. This is the sole ground of universal obligation. For without this moral light there could be no ground

for universal obligation. God is very kind in giving us so much capital to begin with. Rom. 1:19-21; 2:15. This is a light, if not "the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—John 1:9. So that God left not himself without witness. God speaks to the conscience, or to man through the conscience. The first light that a man receives is through the conscience; and all men receive light through the conscience.

(b). Lest nature should not of itself be a sufficient guide for man, conscience is re-enforced by the Holy Spirit. Man's spirit is assisted and enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Conscience of itself, under the pressure of worldly prejudices and influences, becomes so warped that it does not see moral acts, or moral facts either, in their proper perspective and bearing; or it may become so seared as with a hot iron, or so deadened by sin that it scarcely realizes moral differences. The Holy Spirit will heal and rectify the first, and quicken and clarify the second. Evan Roberts said that when God appeared to him, and gave him the Holy Spirit, "It seemed to change all my nature, and I saw things in a different light, and I knew that God was going to work in this land." "Revival in Wales," p. 56. God said to the Antedeluvians through Noah, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." —Gen. 6:3. Here the Spirit was striving with those who were disobedient, I Pet. 3:19f, who always resist the Spirit, Acts 7:51. The Spirit very often works upon those who are resisting the truth. The Spirit not only more or less enlightens those who are resisting the truth, but also those who are not expecting

to receive any new truth, nor to have old truth illluminated. The fact is, He enlightens those who are willing, and those who are unwilling, those who are seeking and those who are resisting.

People who reject all advances from christian workers, and will not heed the word either written or spoken, are often convicted of unbelief and of their need of Christ by the Holy Spirit using the truth already possessed by such. The strivings of the Spirit are usually most felt when most resisted. It pierces the deeper the more He is resisted. And none suffer so much as do those who are rebellious and are bitterly resisting the Spirit. This is what is meant by the Lord's words to Saul, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."—Acts 9:5. The Spirit Himself will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, John 16:7-11. His work on sinners is nearly always unwelcome, and is usually resisted. His work on christians when unasked is usually in the line of giving needed light which they do not realize that they need or want, but which God sees that they need, and is trying to supply. This is usually to comfort or to guide, and sometimes to bring people up to neglected duties. His aid is often given to show and to impress the obligation to perform distasteful duties. His principal business here in this world is to re-enforce the obligations of the word.

(c). Besides the spiritual means of enlightenment the conscience, or the human spirit, and by the Holy Spirit, which represents the conscience of God Himself to us, we have also the material means of obtaining light, namely the spoken word, and the afflictions

and punishments which God uses to enforce on mankind His truths that are unwelcome. The word appeals to the ear, and the afflictions and punishments appeal to the men's emotions of peace and comfort. The Holy Spirit re-enforces the word on the conscience; and the afflictions re-enforce the word by impressions on body and mind. It is a sad fact that nearly all of divine truth which is not pleasant has to be re-enforced either by inner or outer suffering, or by promises of reward or of punishment. As will be hereinafter shown, much of the so-called conviction of people is nothing more nor less than God's displeasure manifested to men through His Executive, which is the Holy Spirit. All conviction is really only God's anger against unrepented sin, when it is unpleasant at all.

(1). Now as to the first or intellectual means of involuntary enlightenment, which is the preaching of the word of God to men who care not for it, or even resist it, it is usually in the form of general calls for sinners to repent, or of invitations for unconverted men to accept Christ as their Savior and example. All of the preaching of the word of God which provokes men to wrath are examples of divine truth involuntarily and unwillingly received. Wicked men both fear and hate the truth, but sometimes come to church out of curiosity, especially during revivals. Usually the truths most disliked are those most needed; while as a rule, the truths most desired are not the ones particularly needed. For frequently when a man is anxious for any particular line of truth, it is because he has already gone to seed along that line, and has it

for a hobby. And when a man has such a hobby he dislikes preaching along any other line.

Most of the preaching of the prophets of the Old Testament was warning against sin, and the coming judgments of God against unrepented sin, and urging the Jews to the performance of unwelcome duties. Resistance to truth, no matter whether it is to the invitations of the gospel or to the acceptance of the promises of God on the one hand, or to the warnings and requirements of the law, and the judgments against their infraction on the other, is in fact fighting against God. God is identified with His truth, is received when it is received, and is rejected when it is rejected. When Christ commissioned His disciples to go forth and preach, He said, "Whosoever receiveth you receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me."—Mat. 10:40. And bitter punishments are pronounced upon every one who refuses to receive the truth. Jeremy Taylor said, "Whoever rejects the light kisses the mouth of a blazing cannon." Men disobey God when they disobey His word; and when they obey God's word they obey Him. There is no such thing as being obedient to God, and yet refusing to receive or obey His word. God's word is simply His communication to men. The Spirit is God's Executive and His word is His message and will. Disobedience to either is disobedience to Him, and we honor Him by obeying His word.

(2). The next class of truths involuntarily received are those given in the form of reproof or admonition. These are nearly always unwelcome. Whether one sins through wilfulness or negligence,

temptation or aggravation, surprise or thoughtlessness, reproof is unpleasant to receive. There is always a sense of humiliation in the consciousness of one's own sins and shortcomings. Human pride always resents human dictation and reproof. Nevertheless christians are repeatedly commanded to "reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." —II Tim. 4:2. In such cases christians are commanded to speak, "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." Over and over again the old prophets were warned to declare the whole counsel of God. The penalties and punishments of eternal damnation were threatened upon them if they were not faithful in their messages. If the instruction, admonition and persuasion of the rebellious were not so important, God would not have made it obligatory. Timothy was exhorted to be "patient, apt to teach, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."—II Tim. 2:24ff.

(d). Much of the will and ways of God is learned through suffering affliction. When men reject the light given them through experience, instruction, admonition and reproof, and when men resist the conviction of truth impressed upon them by the Holy Spirit, God sometimes afflicts them to bring them to their senses. Some men seem utterly unable to understand a truth until they see it actually wrought out in real life. Some are worse still; they cannot believe or receive a truth till they see or feel it in their own

lives. Thomas was one of that kind. He said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."—John 20:25. When he saw, he believed. But there are some who will not believe even when they see. They must feel. Those soldiers who saw Christ rise from the dead refused to credit it. They who received the first-hand testimony planned to offset it by bribing falsehoods. Christ's miracles and conversions are credited to old Beelzebub. Judas himself would not heed any of Christ's warnings and admonitions, but rushed on as an unthinking horse rushes into battle. He was never brought to his senses till Christ was condemned to death, and he himself was in the clutches of the pangs of hell. Peter could totally forget the warnings of his master until he felt the remorse of a guilty conscience for having suddenly fallen into lying and profanity. Nothing but a severe case of leprosy could convince Miriam that Moses was a real prophet of the Lord, and that she must not meddle into other people's social affairs. The self-seeking sons of Korah could not be convinced by the facts, or by logical arguments of any kind. They must be taught by the severer logic of the retribution of broken spiritual law. There are truly some people who are "wiser in their own conceits than seven men that can render a reason."—Prov. 26:16. Some men are opposed to rule of any sort. They chafe under any kind of restraint. In spite of kindly admonition, they continued their opposition to Moses till the earth opened up her mouth, and completely engulfed them.

Punishment is either retributive or reformatory.

The former is given where there is no hope, and that was the kind that the sons of Korah received. No demand, request or exhortation had any effect upon Pharaoh. Each of the ten plagues only brought him to regrets for the punishments, but no real repentance or regrets for his sins. He relented, but repented not. That is the difference between real repentance and bogus repentance. The first is sorrow for sin, and the latter is simply sorrow for the results or the punishment. When people refuse to learn by instruction and admonition, then God uses the severer measures of punishment and affliction. Even these are mercy to the wicked. For anything is kinder than to let men plunge on into perdition. If heaven is cheap at any cost we can afford to suffer anything here to gain the blessedness of heaven. The Psalmist said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept thy word."—Ps. 119: 71, 67. The most precious lessons of God's providence are learned through affliction and suffering. That is why sufferers seem to have a special insight into the will, word and ways of God.

II. Although we receive much enlightenment without any effort on our part, and sometimes against our will, we receive more wisdom, and especially the highest and best kind of wisdom through our own persistent efforts. If we can receive some light with our hearts and minds closed and even resisting, we can surely receive more when they are open, and more still when we are seeking. God has given the world many of the most needed blessings of life without distinction

and discrimination. The veriest necessities of life, as air and water, light and sunshine, are free to all. The means of attaining, maintaining, and regulating the christian life, as reason, conscience and aspiration, are given to all. But spiritual life and the experience of salvation are not given gratuitously. The choicest spiritual blessings are given not only to the favored few, but are given only in response to complete consecration, unwavering faith, and earnest efforts. The wise man said, "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."—Prov. 2:3-5. The best things in the spiritual life are not free. We have to work for the best in the natural life, and in the spiritual life, too. Progress in either demands effort. And real success demands a full price. No man drifts into the christian life. It is the sinner that drifts and does nothing. No man moves toward the kingdom except by his own free will. The rule is, "If ye will return unto me, I will return unto you." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."

(a). The most usual and the most natural method of obtaining spiritual knowledge as well as physical knowledge is by study. The Bible is the great thesaurus of spiritual information. And no man can learn the Bible without study. It is folly and sheer fanaticism to pray the Lord to reveal to us direct what He has already revealed to us in His Holy Word. So Christ exhorted the Jews to "search the Scriptures," to learn of Him.—John 5:39. He did not exhort them

to pray the Lord, and He would tell them about His Son. Yet that is the course that some people both preach and follow, and the results are always folly and fanaticism. Nearly every fanatic sets aside the Bible for his own notions.

Paul, inspired though he was, and a graduate of the greatest theological school, the one at Jerusalem, nevertheless went into retirement for three years to meditate before he began his work. He recognized the need of personal effort in the attainment of spiritual knowledge, and exhorted Timothy to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.—Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them," for in so doing, "thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee."—I Tim. 4:13-16. Parishioners would be better christians if parsons were better preachers. Many a Church member has been muddled up in his life and christian experience because his pastor's theology was muddy. So Paul endeavored to guard Timothy against this mistake by exhorting him to "study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—II Tim. 2:15. It is necessary for the parishioner to hear the word of God expounded as well as to read it for himself to understand it properly. This was the mission of Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch,—just to explain the word of God to him. That exposition of Scripture meant his salvation. He was reading the word, but did not understand it. But Philip's short and luminous exposition threw a flood of light upon that Scriptural enigma. Then again, the word appeals mostly to the intellect alone.

But the preacher's personal presence and faith appeals to his heart, too, and so re-enforces the plain word of God. So the hearer has a double inspiration, the instruction of the word, and the inspiration of another's faith, which is always contagious. "For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But how shall they hear without a preacher?"—Rom. 10:14. The advertisements of patent medicines, or of inventions are not enough to convince us. We want the testimony of some creditable person whom we know. Some few are convinced by the advertisements; but many more are convinced by the personal testimony of friends and acquaintances. Some people are convinced by the word of God alone. But many more are convinced by the personal testimony of their friends and acquaintances that the balm of Gilead is able to heal the sin-sick soul. Oral testimony helps the one who gives it and the one who receives it also.

(b). Related to the above is another method very similar. As experience of truth is one of the sources of spiritual knowledge, so experiment is one of the methods of obtaining spiritual knowledge. In the laboratories of science, men experiment over and over again to arrive at facts and laws, principles and truths. After men have become practically certain as to the substance of truth, they will continue to experiment to test the truth and the extent of its application, and then to perfect its statement and use. Edison spends day after day experimenting with electricity, and by so doing, has learned very thoroughly the principles of the telephone, telegraph and phonograph. His numerous experiments have enabled him to develop and per-

fect these instruments beyond anything ever attained before. The great advancement in medicine and surgery of the last few years was made by repeated experiments. Most of the Agricultural Colleges are simply schools of experiment to learn the best methods of farming.

Men have come to the knowledge of spiritual truths in the same way. All of the great christian workers have attained to their proficiency likewise. It is said that Sam Jones tried various methods of preaching till he found one that was successful, and then followed it. D. L. Moody came to his great and unusual success only after trying and testing a great variety of methods. The Holy Club at Oxford tried many plans before it found one that was satisfactory to live by. John Wesley, John Fletcher and George Whitefield all fasted and prayed till they nearly ruined their health. Meanwhile they were testing many different methods of living a christian, trying to find the best one. After trying repeatedly to obtain salvation by works, they thoroughly learned and taught that salvation is not by works, but by faith in Jesus Christ alone. Nearly every one who is working out his salvation is experimenting, trying to ascertain the easiest and most successful way to live. So some of the departments of Church work have grown out of experiments which were made in trying to meet the demands and needs of the world. This has also given rise to nearly all of the various denominations, each one using and advocating a different method of getting saved, or of doing Church work. As we see them learning the success or failure of the different methods, we see them

coming nearer and nearer together in doctrine, polity and manner of administration.

We also learn both the will and ways of God by experiment. Moses learned the presence and power of the Lord by experimenting with the rod. Korah and his friends wanted to be priests, and to offer incense, too. Moses let them make the experiment. He told them to get censers, and offer incense, and see if God would accept them. They did so, and the earth swallowed them up. Nadab and Abihu thought that strange fire or any other fire was just as good as the consecrated fire from the altar of God. But they lost their lives in making the experiment.

These sad facts bring forward another important point. God will often let men experiment with nature and doubtful things that they may learn the facts in the case. But God absolutely prohibits men from experimenting with what He has clearly and unequivocally prohibited. No latitude or liberty is allowed here. Nothing is permitted in the field of God's absolute commands and prohibitions but unquestioning obedience. God is willing to help us in obtaining the truth. But He permits no evasion, hesitation or equivocation as to truths or commands concerning which we are certain. Above all things, God does not allow us to experiment with evil. This was the sin of Adam and Eve. God absolutely forbade the use of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and explicitly declared to them what would be the consequences of an infraction of His order. His clear and positive command was not enough for them. His declaration of death as certain to follow

disobedience was insufficient to deter them. They must know for themselves. They soon learned by sad experience that God's orders are not to be trifled with. God does not want us to experiment with evil now any more than He did in ancient times. We can know both from testimony and from wide observation that the use of whiskey and tobacco is injurious. If we defy the truth testified and observed, we must suffer the consequences.

On the other hand, God promised great blessings to Israel upon certain conditions. The people doubted and hesitated. The prophet encouraged them, and said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—Mal. 3:10.

(c). Following closely upon the last two points, and growing out of them, is another very similar. Men must learn the profoundest truths by faithful obedience. Scientists, experimenting in the laboratories, learn but little, almost nothing, till they get into line with natural law. Of course while out of line, they can learn that they are not getting nor doing what they want. They can soon see, too, that they are not in harmony with natural law. Still as long as they are not in harmony with natural law they are making no practical progress in knowing nature. Men discover but little if anything at all that is new until they learn the principles and limits of natural law, and then work within its bounds. But progress in knowledge

and practical application are usually very easy and rapid when one gets and keeps in line with the principles of natural law. Beyond it or contrary to it, progress is next to impossible. It matters not whether it is steam or electricity, physics or surgery or medicine, one must follow the lines of natural law to make any progress in invention or knowledge either. One may learn by making experiments contrary to natural law, that some things are impossible, and also the effects of the violation of it.

The same is true of the christian life, too. Men make progress in the christian life and in religious knowledge only by obedience to the laws of both the natural and spiritual life, and especially the latter. Those who study morals and divine things but do not obey, "are ever learning, but are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."—II Tim. 3:2-9. The superior knowledge and wisdom of Jesus was obtained through His superior obedience. He Himself declared that He came to the knowledge of the truth in His human estate by obedience. The Jews asked, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."—John 7:15-17.

There is a great advantage to the world at large in making simple obedience the principal means of obtaining spiritual knowledge. Did it depend upon money or position, ability or training, study or opportunity, it would in a sense be unequal and unjust. But the fact that it depends upon simple obedience,

puts spiritual understanding within the reach of all, even of the poorest and the humblest, yes, even of the one who has scarcely brains enough to render him accountable. And sometimes we see this truth exemplified in some one much below mediocre, and yet because of whose loyalty and obedience to God, he has gained an insight into divine things which seems to be denied to the wise and learned. Jesus acknowledged this fact, and expressed His appreciation of it, when He said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."—Mat. 11:25.

There is another advantage in the divine plan of giving spiritual knowledge. It not only gives the poor and ignorant a chance equal with the man better situated in worldly things; it makes the difference, where there is a difference, always in favor of the pure and the obedient. They are the ones who need spiritual knowledge most. The truth is, the disobedient do not need any light. They sin against the light they have. More light would not help their souls while they continue in sin. Greater light would only increase their damnation. Light to a wicked man is a curse and not a blessing. God only gives to wicked men enough light to show them their duty, and to warn them against neglecting it. So it is very kind in God to give the most light to those who want to walk in it; and in refusing it to those who reject it. Christ said, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."—Mat. 6:23. Paul said, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."—II Cor. 4:3.

This point can be illustrated very well from social life, and its customs. People do not care to reveal their secrets to those whom they know to be their enemies, or even to mere acquaintances. But to people who love us, care for us and have our interest at heart, we sometimes tell our secrets and plans, especially if they are willing to help us carry them out. Usually men wait to see whether others can be trusted with their plans and secrets before they become very communicative to them. God is much the same way with us. He does not tell everybody His secrets. He waited to prove Israel. The Psalmist David said, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him."—Ps. 25:14. Fear in the Scripture often means obedience. Then it means that God gives His secrets to them that obey Him.

(d). Prayer is another means of obtaining spiritual knowledge. Many spiritual difficulties will not yield either to study or to experiment. Men are quite helpless in the spiritual realm. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned."—I Cor. 2:14. The Holy Ghost must teach us some things which we cannot learn by ourselves. Prayer for divine wisdom is simply asking the great teacher to teach us. He does this through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is given in answer to prayer. When He comes He will teach men and guide them into all truth.—John 14:26. God teaches us in two ways. He illuminates the word, and sharpens and clarifies one's spiritual vision. The incoming of the Holy Spirit not only imparts a spiritual perceptiveness, and conditions favorable to obtaining spiritual wisdom, but He gives us an insight into

old truth also. First, He brings old truth to our remembrance, and flashes new meaning into it, and shows its importance, significance and application. So that old truths known and used, and possibly unused, will stand out in a relation never before thought of. Next, He will lead men into truths entirely new, calling attention to passages of Scripture never noticed before, and some apparently meaningless and useless. Things perplexing and confusing have become clear as the noonday when they were taken to the Lord in prayer. Many spiritual difficulties seemingly refuse to yield to study alone. God Himself must explain some of His own problems and mysteries. This He has promised to do in quite a number of passages of Scripture. The Lord's own brother after the flesh tells us, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."—Jas. 1:5. Cornelius of Cæsarea received explicit direction to send for Peter, who was then at Joppa, and would be found upon the house-top of Simon a tanner, who lived by the seaside. He and his location were pointed out very definitely, Acts 10:3-6, 30-33. Peter also received specific directions and instructions in regard to the will of God concerning his new call to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, while he was praying, Acts 10:9-20. God has promised to teach us His way, Ps. 25:9; 32:8; His judgment, Ps. 25:9; His doctrine, John 7:17; His wisdom, Jas. 1:5; I Cor. 1:30; His will, Eph. 5:17; our sins, John 16:7-9; our salvation, Rom. 8:16; our needs, Rom. 8:26f; our gifts and blessings, I Cor. 2:12; I John 3:24. This wisdom is not for

everybody; but for the obedient, John 7:17; the meek, Ps. 25:9; the faithful and steady, Jas. 1:5-6.

God reveals His will in other ways besides His word. Occasionally He does it by His miracles and providences. He answers in different ways, because people ask for different things, and for guidance in different ways. Some ask God to impress upon them what He wants them to do. Others ask God to show them His will by opening the door that He wants them to enter, and to close all the doors which He does not want them to enter. Still others ask for God to give them signs to indicate His will. Gideon asked God to give him the sign of the wet fleece and the dry ground, and the dry fleece and the wet ground, to show whether God would save Israel by His hand or not. Some very wisely ask God to show them His will through His Holy Word, which is really God's appointed way for the instruction of men. Others ask God to give them a passage of Scripture indicating His will. Still others ask God to help them to understand the Scriptures while they are searching them to ascertain His will.

God delights to show men His will if they love His will. "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." But the carnally minded and sinful are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They are not ready for it, and it would do them no good, but harm. Christ refused to give any signs to mere curiosity seekers, Mat. 16:1-4. He has also declared that the stubborn and rebellious will some day seek Him, and not be able to find Him; they shall call, but He will not answer them, Prov. 1:23-33.

But no matter in what way we ask, or in what manner we seek, God will give us light if we need it and ask it. God is making great efforts to enable us to learn His will. He sent His prophets and apostles; He gave us both the law and the prophets, both the gospels and epistles; He gave us His Son for an example, and His Spirit for a guide. All needful provisions have been made for our learning. The things written aforetime were written for our learning. If we cannot learn God's will on all essential points of life, it is our fault and not God's. Not only ought we to seek divine wisdom in prayer as a last resort; we ought to use it faithfully while we use the other means which God has provided for our enlightenment. In fact we should use all of God's appointed means to learn His Holy will in everything.

PART II

CONVICTION, OR THE SENSE OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

CHAPTER V.

Definitions and Limitations.

THE discussion of the preceding chapters has laid the foundation for the principles of this section. For conviction, or the sense of moral obligation, depends upon the quality and amount of spiritual light. If a man understands the principles of religious knowledge, its extent, limitations, significance and obligations, he will understand the signifcance, limitations and principles of religious conviction. In fact, some of the points concerning conviction ought to be clear already from the previous discussion. The practical application of the principles already laid down will be shown and discussed in the succeeding chapters.

1. **Definitions.** There should be more discrimination used in regard to the term conviction. Confusion of terms confuses thought and the transmission of thought. Conviction is sometimes confused with repentance, and sometimes with conversion. It is neither, notwithstanding the fact that it is an essential condition of both, and a concomitant of both. The Standard Dictionary defines conviction as "the

state of being convinced; also a proposition firmly believed; the state of being religiously convicted." Webster says conviction means "the act of convincing of sin and sinfulness; the state of being convinced or convicted by conscience; the act of convincing one of error; strong belief on the ground of satisfactory evidence, without any implication of previous error." In a religious sense, the verb convict means "to awaken to a consciousness of sin."

We wish to notice this last definition a little more closely. Most people believe that it implies and includes two things which are not necessarily a part of conviction. The first is, that it implies that the person convicted has been in previous error, or has committed some serious sin. The second is, that so many believe that no person has conviction till he has some harrowing feelings, which they think are the very essence of conviction itself. In some cases of conviction these two elements may be present, and may be necessary to some forms of conviction. But they are not necessary in all cases. There are variations in conviction just as there are variations in knowledge. Religious knowledge has different factors in it; so has religious convictions.

Conviction is a feeling or persuasion that one act is right, and that another is wrong; and that one is under obligation to do right, and avoid the wrong; and in some instances it is a feeling of having done wrong, and that one is under a condemnation for having done wrong, and deserves punishment. This feeling of obligation springs from a knowledge of right and wrong, and of duty, Jas. 4:17. Springing from a

knowledge of duty, conviction is increased by an increase of a knowledge of duty, Luke 12:47f. All sane men have some knowledge of duty, and so have conviction, Rom. 1:18-21; even among the heathen, Rom. 2:12-16. Some duties are universal, and are obligatory upon all men, as for example, the duty of keeping the ten commandments. Then there are some duties which are special and personal, John 21:21f. The former is more important, being universal and applicable to all; but the latter is no less obligatory upon the individual to whom they are assigned. Jonah was under just as much obligation to preach to Nineveh as he was to observe the decalogue. Paul was under the compulsion of a woe, to warn and woo the Gentiles, just as much as he was to walk in all the commandments and ordinances blameless, Acts 26:16-20; I Cor. 9:16.

A man is under obligation to learn his special duties as well as his general ones, Luke 12:47f. This is shown in the command to search the Scriptures, John 5:39; in the charge to study as well as to read, I Tim. 4:13-16; in the effort to disseminate the gospel by preaching, Mat. 28:19f; in the fact that men are punished for rejecting special truths just as much as they are for the general ones, as for instance old Pharoah, Acts 28:26f; Rom. 1:28; Ex. 7-12. Christ wants the conviction of duty to be abiding, and blesses those who retain it, Luke 12:43; and curses those who do not, Luke 12:47f; and constantly exhorts to fidelity and continuance in well doing, John 15:4, 9. In fact, only those who have this conviction of truth and duty in them until death, and act accordingly, have any

promise of salvation, Mat. 10:22; Heb. 3:14. Our salvation is in our spirit and attitude more than in our works, or definite acts, because we carry our nature and disposition with us. So our nature and character is of far more importance than is our conduct.

Conviction is a feeling of obligation to do the right and eschew the wrong, and exists in all sane men, without respect to past course of conduct, present moral purpose, or spiritual condition. Conscience is the faculty, and conviction is the act or state of the conscience, in its moral attitudes. He who has always acted upon his convictions of truth and duty, no matter whether absolutely right or not, need never have, and rarely ever has that torture of soul, usually termed conviction, but improperly so. No one who walks in all the light he has, need ever have that agony of soul due solely to having resisted the truth or the Spirit, either in the past or in the present. Why should one feel any more misery of mind or soul when receiving the truth at one time any more than at another, unless he resists the truth. The reason that the truth heard after conversion does not produce the mental misery called conviction, is because of the present condition and attitude of one's soul. The soul having been properly adjusted to moral truth, and toward all duty, past, present and future, it can no longer feel any compunctions of conscience therefor. The misery of soul resulting from the truth presented to its consciousness is simply because of its consciousness of the commission of sins in the past, of its present sinfulness, or of its rebellion against present duty. If such consciousness of past sins or of present sinful-

ness be removed, neither the truth nor the Spirit, nor the consciousness of any present obligation, need produce any unrest, anxiety or misery in the soul. If so, why should the preaching of the word to any soul who has never erred from truth nor duty consciously nor intentionally, produce a harrowing of the feelings, commonly called conviction. The soul can so fully and quickly adjust itself to all truth and duty as it comes to them, as never to be out of the divine order, and never feel any pang or sting from them either great or small at any time. It is the past moral conduct, or the present condition of the soul, or its present attitude toward truth and duty, that causes the present effect of truth upon the soul. If the soul has been right in the past, and is still right, the reception of truth by it is a pleasure. If it is not right, and has not been, the reception of truth may be a misery. A present consciousness of righteousness enables one to shout for joy while listening to a sermon which makes some sinners quail, gnash their teeth or cry for mercy. In fact a christian who is saved up to date, can shout under severer truths than those which first brought him to the penitent form. The effect which the truth has upon a man's feelings, as well as upon his life, depends almost entirely upon the manner and spirit with which he receives it. So a man's feelings are more or less under the control of his will, and he can make them pleasant or miserable, just as he chooses. They are entirely so within certain limits.

II. A number of observations and discriminations should be made here. There are two forms of conviction, from the moral standpoint. The first is a sense

of obligation to do the right and eschew the wrong. The second is a sense of being wrong, or of having done wrong. The first exists before, during and after the act, in fact all the time of one's consciousness and sanity. The second exists only after a wrong act, or during the time of the consciousness of one's carnality. All rational men have the first. No one need ever have the second, though all do sometimes, and some do all the time, because their consciences are never relieved of its burden of sin, by a proper moral adjustment.

People often confuse conviction and affliction. Every sane man right or wrong has conviction. Affliction comes only to those who have resisted the truth or the sense of duty more or less. When some men pray for God to convict men, they mean for His Spirit to reprove those who are rejecting His truth, or resisting His Spirit, and to afflict their souls, so that misery of soul may drive them to do what a mere sense of duty will not do. When one will not do his duty, right his wrongs, seek a change of heart, or the eradication of an evil nature, he resists his own convictions of right and wrong, and brings upon himself the wrath of God, Heb. 10:26-29. In fighting against God he brings affliction upon himself, Acts 9:5. This wrath was very manifest when under the apostles' preaching it is said that their hearers were "cut to the heart." Their suffering and soul torture were expressed by that phrase.

In addition to one's being conscious of having done wrong, or of being wrong, there is also a feeling of remorse and affliction that comes from the conscious-

ness of rebellion against God, and from His wrath that He shows against us, Acts 5:33; 7:51-54. This feeling never comes to any but those who do resist, or have resisted known truth. This is one reason why some people never have that intense feeling of misery commonly called conviction, that others have. It is absurd and unjust to expect all classes, old and young, moral and wicked, savage and civilized, to have the same kind and amount of conviction, or of feelings either. The men mentioned in the book of Acts had resisted, and were continuing to resist the word of God. The remorse of Judas Iscariot was due to his persistent resistance to the truth faithfully impressed upon him during all of Christ's ministry, Mat. 27:3-5.

The words convict and convince are both derived from the same root, and mean practically the same thing. They are but little used in the Scriptures, only about nine or ten times in all. And in only a part of these are they used in the sense of making one feel sinful or miserable, or sorry for past sins, or for a present evil nature. The sense in which it is used in the Bible corresponds almost exactly to the sense in which it is used in the dictionaries. The fact is, their definitions seem to be taken mostly from the Bible itself. The Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias give the same sense to these words. As the Bible Encyclopedia says, "Conviction, in general, is the assurance of the truth of any proposition. In a religious sense, it is the first degree of repentance, and implies an affecting sense that we are guilty before God; that we can do nothing of ourselves to gain his forfeited favor; that sin is very odious and hateful, yea, the greatest

of evils." Convict and convince are used in four senses in the Bible. First, it is sometimes used in the sense of winning to a truth. Second, in the sense of making men feel the sinfulness of sin, John 16:7-11. Third, in the sense of impressing men that they themselves have committed sin, Job. 32:12; John 8:46; I Cor. 14:24; Tit. 1:9; Jude 15. Fourth, it is used in the sense of condemning one for sin, no matter whether he realizes it or not, John 8:9; Jas. 2:9.

Let it be noticed that in three of the above senses the words may not refer to any effect on the feelings either by the truth or by the Spirit. And even in the remaining case, the feelings may not necessarily be wrought upon. Of course in each one of these cases the feelings may be moved; yet not necessarily so. In each one of these cases also, the one convicted may feel and show the same nonchalance that condemned criminals often show before the bar of justice when receiving their life or death sentence. No matter if they are convicted and condemned to a severe sentence, they act indifferently, whether they feel so or not. Who is foolish enough to say that because the culprit does not have or show any feelings that he is not convicted, or that he does not know that he is convicted? Men under conviction often declare that they are under conviction, that they know it, and that they deserve it, and still manifest an apparent indifference. I say apparent, for it may be only apparent, though sometimes it does truly seem to be real. The mind may be convinced without the heart or will either being moved. Such cases very frequently occur.

The word affliction is used in various senses also.

It is used in the sense of sorrow, distress, oppression or persecution, Ex. 1:11f; 3:7; Job 5:6; Mk. 4:17. Here in one passage it is used rather in the sense of distressing or punishing to compel to perform work required. In the above instances the subject is passive under it. But it is also used in a reflexive sense. In the Old Testament men are commanded to afflict their souls, Lev. 16:29, 31; Num. 29:7; Isa. 58:3, 5. In these passages it is used in the same sense as when a man is told to weep and howl, especially for his sins. God sometimes does for men what they refuse to do for themselves. He is not only represented as punishing men to compel them to obey, but men are also represented as obeying Him because He punished them. The Psalmist said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I have kept thy word." Again he said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes."—119:67, 71; Heb. 12:10f. If God afflicts men in body and property to compel obedience, it is reasonable to suppose that He would afflict them in mind also for the same reason. This is very likely the case with Saul when it is said that an "evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."—I Sam. 16:14; 18:10; 19:9. No doubt he had what some people call "old time Bible conviction." It very well answers the description.

In the New Testament, the description of affliction is given several times without using the word itself. It is said that men "were pricked in their hearts," "they were cut to the heart," Acts 2:37; 5:33; 7:54. This was due to the preaching of the word under the power of the Spirit. In these cases both the

mind and heart were affected; the truth affecting the mind, and the Spirit reaching both. Let it be noticed too, that while this is supposed to be real conviction, the word is not used in connection with either of these instances. In the New Testament the word afflict is used also in the reflexive sense as in Jas. 4:9, where he commands them to mourn over their sins. These descriptions show that the soul suffering sometimes termed conviction may be purely voluntary and active, as well often involuntary. Bible passages show that it is sometimes affliction on the person, as in persecution and captivity as in the case of Manasseh, II Chron. 33:10-13; or in the mind and soul, as in Lam. 1:12, where the affliction is called sorrow due to anger.

It has been fully shown that conviction in its primary sense is merely a sense of right and wrong, or rather a sense of the rightness of right, and the wrongness of wrong. This is all that is necessary to begin the christian life, or to begin any act or course of conduct. It is not necessary to feel bad to become a christian, or to perform any act of righteousness. All that God desires is for men to walk in all the light they have, and they can do this no matter whether they have little or much light, and no matter whether they feel good or bad. God is reasonable, and He wants us to recognize that He is reasonable, and to act reasonable ourselves.

God wants us to wait for conviction without waiting for affliction. When people are invited to come to Christ, they excuse themselves by saying that they have no conviction. But every rational man has all

the conviction that he needs upon which to act to get into the kingdom of God. So many have foolishly imagined and taught that nothing but distress of mind or soul is conviction so much and so long, that numbers of sinners take refuge behind their own indifference as a sufficient and legitimate excuse for refusing to accept Christ now. Whereas people should be taught that their obligations are in proportion to their light, and not in proportion to their feelings. And men's feelings are not always in proportion to their light; in fact, their feelings may be in the inverse ratio to their light. As a rule, the illiterate have, or at least manifest more feelings than do the highly educated. There are exceptions however. But they are very few.

When men refuse to act or to turn to Christ because of a lack of any or of sufficient feeling, they should be apprised of the fact that acting upon conviction, if it be real conviction, not only increases the consciousness of one's conviction, but also increases the feeling often attending conviction, and causes it, if not already present. In one of my revivals several years ago, a young man hesitated to come to Christ, under the excuse that he lacked feeling, or conviction, as he called it. He had recently married. I asked him if he felt much affection when he first began courting his wife. He replied in the negative. I then asked him if he did not feel more affection for her after he courted her awhile. He said, "Certainly." I said then, "You begin seeking the hand of the Lord, and you will soon have so much affection for Him that you will not want to do without Him, any more than you would want to live without your wife. He said that he never

thought of it in that way. The next night after I showed him this principle he came forward to the altar. He had no sooner reached the altar than he began to weep very bitterly. Nobody during all that gracious revival manifested as much feeling as did he.

It is of no use to wait for conviction in the sense of feeling in order to act or begin the christian life. It is men's duty to act upon their sense, and not upon their feelings. John Wesley exhorted his people to "trample under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that we are not to do good unless our hearts are free to it." It is mere folly to wait for feeling. Waiting for conviction in the sense of light is true and noble, manly and Christlike. This is simply waiting for light in which to walk. But waiting for conviction in the sense of feeling, or rather for affliction, is really stubborn disobedience to the light one has, and rebellion against the truth one possesses.

This principle can be very clearly illustrated from everyday life. And often men are much wiser in the practical everyday life of the world than they are in religious affairs. Christ Himself said that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than are the children of light. Suppose that a parent commands a child to perform some little chore or run some errand, and the child says, "I do not feel like it now. I am waiting for conviction." And suppose that every time the parent gave it a command, the child should say, "I do not feel like it," you would say it simply did not want to obey, or it would obey, feeling or no feeling. Most parents would give it some feeling by a little manual dexterity. If so, is it conviction that he gives

it, or is it affliction? Such an excuse on the part of the child is nothing more nor less than pure disobedience.

The same is true also of every person who refuses to walk in the light that he has, simply because he does not feel like it. Is the child foolish? So is the sinner. Is the child disobedient and wicked? So is the sinner. Is the child under obligation to do his duty whether he feels like it or not? So is the sinner. Is the child responsible for his refusal to obey? So is the sinner. Yet the old false doctrine that conviction is not sense but feeling, and that we are not to act till we have that sort of conviction, lends its support to such rebellion and disobedience. And when a person says that he is waiting for conviction, he is not really waiting for conviction, but till God afflicts him, and punishes him till he is perfectly miserable; so that for the sake of peace and comfort he surrenders, and give himself to Christ. It is high time that this refuge of lies was swept away. Thousands of sinners are today hiding behind this flimsy excuse, when they ought to be shown that God requires them to walk in all the light they have, no matter how they feel; and that any excuse for not making an immediate surrender to God is sure evidence of disobedience and rebellion, and needs strong rebuke.

Conviction, as some call it, but in reality the troubled feeling due to the Spirit's rebuke for wilful disobedience, may be gotten or increased in either one of two ways, which are almost the opposite of each other. In some people one of these methods will bring conviction, while in others the second method will

produce it. One can bring feeling, or increase it if he already has it, by walking in the light he already possesses. Yielding to, or walking in the light of one's conviction, often tends to break a hard heart, or a stubborn will. This is especially true when one has been for a long time resisting the light of truth and duty, and rebelling against its plain obligations. Second, fighting against one's conviction often tends to press its obligations the more forcibly upon him. This was what was meant when the Lord said to Paul when smitten down, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."—Acts 9 : 5. Fighting against recognized obligations often makes them seem the more obligatory. And usually the profoundest convictions are found in people who have long fought the truth, and made all manner of excuses for not accepting its obligations. Their final and forced surrender makes the truth seem more important. Resisting the truth without particularly fighting it will occasionally drown one's feelings, and deaden the dictates of one's conscience, as well as increase them. Neglecting or smothering the convictions hardens the heart and drives away the chiding Spirit.

III. The influence which the truth has on the mind depends almost wholly upon the spirit and manner in which it is received. Therefore it is well to discuss this subject a little further. This is necessary for a proper diagnosis of the various cases, and a proper diagnosis is most important in religious therapeutics as well as in physiological. In regard to the state of the feelings when receiving the truth, there are four classes mentioned in the Bible.

First, there are some people who receive the truth as a matter of no importance, either one way or the other. It is no more than a mere fable to them. In a sense they neither accept nor reject the truth. However their non-acceptance of gospel truth is its practical rejection. Those who neglect the truth remain unsaved just as much as if they had wilfully rejected the truth. Indeed they are the most discouraging people to whom the minister of the gospel ever has to preach. The Athenians belonged to this class.—Acts 17 : 32f. They listened to the gospel as if it were of no more importance than were the discussions of Greek philosophy. Indeed it meant no more to them. To some of them not so much. To such it was mere foolishness. Paul distinctly states that this was the impression which it made upon the Greeks, both Athenians and Corinthians. He said that the gospel was "to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness."—I Cor. 1 : 23.

Second, there is another class who do not feel any particular misery of soul when receiving the truth. This class is that of those who have endeavored to live a moral life, but have failed to measure up in their conduct to their own ideals and endeavors. These are the ones who are ignorantly feeling after God, and are stumbling along in the moral twilight, and are groping after more light and a larger life. When new light, hope or power is offered to them, they receive it willingly, yea, even gladly;—Acts 2 : 41 ; 13 : 41 ; or as the Bereans did, "with all readiness of mind."—17 : 11.

Some men are wicked because of their own evil nature. Others are wicked from mere weakness, or

from the influence over them of a wicked person, who is stronger or beloved. The first class are wicked themselves, and make others so, too. The latter have good intentions, but are led by the intentions of others. These often hear the preaching of the word gladly. This was true of Herod the tetrarch. He heard John gladly, but his wife turned him against John.—John 6:20. Those who have been long deprived of the gospel usually receive it gladly when it is given.—Mk. 13:37. This is the reason why the gospel is gladly received by children, by the heathen, and often by the ignorant wicked in civilized lands. It is a fact, very patent and marked to every close observer, that it is only those who have wilfully resisted the light in the past, and have done it repeatedly and continuously, who suffer pungent pains from pointed preaching.

Third, there are two classes of people who are afflicted with a torture of soul often termed conviction. One is of the kind who is even now resisting the truth, and feels bad because he is resisting the light, and sinning against it. They wilfully refuse to obey the truth. These are the ones who are cut to the heart when plain, pointed, pungent truth is presented to them under the unction and power of the Holy Ghost. They are the people who persecute those who preach or live the truth.—Acts 5:33; 7:54. In fact their present torture of soul is due principally to their present wilful rejection of the truth, though not wholly so. For past moral obliquity may be responsible for a good portion of it. But the present wilful disobedience strongly emphasizes the agony of soul due to past moral defects. In fact, the present attitude of soul

decides the present feeling of the soul, as well as its moral state, more than does any other one thing. But the second class, which is that of those conscious of past transgressions, does not as a rule suffer as much as does the class who are now consciously and wilfully disobedient. They suffer from the consciousness of past sins, but have no desire for moral improvement.

Fourth, the next class is that one partly related to the former. This is the class who now want to do right, are trying to do right, but are tortured by a sense of their past sins. Many who are now living reasonably clean, moral lives, are brought under a painful sense of their past godlessness and disobedience by plain, pointed Scriptural preaching. Though having resisted the light in the past, new light, or old light with new force, has brought them to the point of decision to obey and receive the truth. They may be hesitating about accepting Christ, and beginning the christian life, or they may have already resolved to live for God. But the consciousness of past disobedience, and of their present subjection to dominant evil habits, give them a painful sense of sorrow and regret. We have several such instances in the Acts of the Apostles. All had resisted the truth in the past; but all had resolved upon reformation of life, and acceptance of Christ as their personal Savior. All too were inquiring the way of life. These were the hearers of Pentecost, Paul while at Damascus, and the Philippian jailer.—Acts 2:37f; 9:5f; 16:30-33. The form of the feeling of this class is regret for past conduct. When they have feeling, it is not as poignant as is that of the class which is still fighting the truth. Their pres-

ent desire to accept the truth as the rule of their lives breaks its pungent influence over them, more or less.

The effort to adjust one's self to the truth clears the conscience of some of its shadows. The desire and the effort to adjust one's self to God and His truth may be so eager and earnest that its acceptance may be very aptly characterized in the words of Scripture, "then they heard the word gladly."—Mk. 6:20. This refers to a man who has always been regarded as wicked, but who was probably wicked from mere weakness. Yet the word declares that Herod heard John gladly. Some may say that it did not amount to anything because he heard it in that way. But the inspired writer does not seem to want to make that impression, for he declares that he not only **heard** him, but that he **did many things.** This more than intimates that he strove to obey many things that he heard. This statement also shows that present poignancy of feeling is due principally to present resistance to known truth and duty. For Herod's past life had been far from ideal. But his present eagerness or willingness broke the force of the influence of his past life on his feelings of comfort.

CHAPTER VI.

The Objects of Conviction.

THE objects of conviction are always and only truth and duty, and their opposites, sin and error. A discussion of truth and duty alone would not be complete in itself. Their bounds and obligations cannot be understood without a knowledge of their contraries. In fact, it is impossible to discuss the one without at the same time discussing the other. A man cannot consistently exhort one to the performance of a duty without at the same time warning him against the neglect thereof. Moreover the contrast to anything always shows it up more clearly. White always appears more brilliant when shown against a dark background. So righteousness always seems much more obvious when it is contrasted to sins or sinfulness. A just presentation of character can be made only by showing its relation to both duty and sin; to its virtues and its defects; to omit either the positive or the negative would be equivalent to the attempt to build upon an incomplete foundation.

I. Conviction relates first and primarily to duty, and to duty which is present. We are under no obligation to observe the Christian Sabbath on either Saturday or Monday, or on any other day. But we are under obligation to celebrate the Christian Sabbath when Sunday comes. Every day brings its own

duty. Monday's responsibility is the performance of the plain practical duties of everyday life. Holy rest, sacred service, and christian worship are the duties of the Christian Sabbath.

Again, we are under no obligation to do what is ahead, or absent, or impossible. The present, possible and needful define the bounds of present obligation. We may know what is going to be our duties and calling in the future, before we are under any obligation whatever to take them up. Nevertheless we are under obligation in such cases to prepare for coming duty, and to make no engagements conflicting with it, which would either prevent or hinder the performance of it when it comes. While "the King's business requireth haste," "he that believeth shall not make haste."—I Sam. 21:8; Isa. 28:16. Christ exemplified this principle in two ways. First, He kept His disciples under training for three years; thus paying a high compliment to intellectual preparation, as well as to observation and experience in life. Second, after He arose from the dead, He exhorted His disciples to "wait for the promise of the Father," and to "tarry at the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high."—Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8. This shows men's dependence upon the Holy Ghost for results. Christ very clearly called the twelve to preach the gospel. It is very clear also that He wanted men to prepare to preach, by the very course that He followed with them, in keeping them under His own instruction so long before sending them out. Some fanatics would have sent them out right away, whether they were prepared or not. God

planned the salvation of the world 4,000 years before He sent Jesus Christ to consummate the plan.

A call to the ministry is a call to **prepare** for the ministry. A call to any position is a call to **prepare** for it, unless perchance one is prepared already. There is a development in faith and patience that comes by waiting. Sometimes God seems to delay men in their work to give them time to polish and deliberate. Some men are anxious to learn everything, and try to learn everything except the **wisest** and **best** way to apply what they know. One needs to study the perplexing problems that belong to every **important** position, no matter what it is. Even while a mere youth, David was summoned to the kingship of Israel. But he did not come to the throne for nearly ten years. Saul too was anointed king some time before he came to the throne. In his case, there were several steps to the throne. He was first anointed by Samuel. Then after he had a chance to show his ability for leadership by his victory over Israel's enemies, he was elected to the kingship under Samuel's supervision. Shortly after that he was publicly inaugurated. Elisha was anointed to succeed Elijah about ten years before Elijah was transported to heaven. I have known of several men who declared that they felt called to preach the gospel in their childhood. But they did not preach when they first felt their call. Neither did they or anybody else think that they ought to preach then. They were under no obligation to enter upon the office and work of the ministry before they had attained to sufficient age and preparation. But when sufficient age, and mental and spiritual preparation

have been attained, and appropriate opportunities have come, then their obligation becomes immediate. —Acts 9:20; 26:19f; Gal. 1:16. Men must be prepared, and the time fully ripe for men to act. An immediate call unites in time and men.

II. Convictions of duty will fasten upon a delinquent soul a sense of his moral defects, both of his definite acts and his neglects. The amount of such a sense of delinquency depends upon the degree of enlightenment, and the extent of one's moral deficiency. Conviction includes a sense of the guilt of the commission of sins, and also a sense of one's moral obliquity; but is not limited to them. So many make the mistake of so limiting it. The foolish virgins were convicted of carelessness and indifference and indolence.—Mat. 25:8-13. The prodigal son was pained with a sense of his ingratitude, indolence, dissipation and sinful extravagance.—Luke 15:18f. The penitents of Pentecost were cut to the heart for their malice and murder of Christ. As a rule, sins of commission are followed by a stronger feeling than are sins of omission; because sins of commission require a more active and a stronger volition for their performance than do sins of omission. For most sins of omission are due to weakness rather than to wilfulness, and to weakness rather than to wickedness. Those who have been guilty of sins of omission may have made many good resolutions; yea, may have made many weak attempts to carry them into effect. They may have made both resolutions and attempts, too, to do the contrary of their final acts. Their desires for evil may be far stronger than are all their

volitions for good. So often when men commit sins of omission they do so because they are not able to carry out their good intentions, their will not being able to overcome their evil impulses. But those who are guilty of the sins of commission perform them because they are intelligently determined to do so. This shows in part why some men have deep and pungent feelings on account of their sins, while others have not. The first have wilfully resisted the Spirit, and wrought evil. They work evil because they prefer evil to good. They commit sin because they love sin, and hate righteousness; they have no other excuse for their conduct. The other class of people have purposed no evil, as a rule. They have wrought neither much good nor much evil. In fact, they may have had many good intentions and purposes. But good intentions alone will never revolutionize the character. It takes purpose as well as impulses to move and make and mold a man. It is necessary to enlist the will as well as the affections to move and direct a man. Nevertheless good intentions, even though they fail of final fruitage, serve to palliate a guilty conscience in a sort of a way. As good intentions pacify the convictions of the soul for the performance of duty without its actual performance, so evil intentions, even when falling short of full execution, produce an affliction of soul very often quite similar to that caused by evil doing itself.

Evil thoughts and purposes are sins, and must be forgiven. Simon Magus had not sinned in deed, but only in thought and purpose.—Acts 8: 18-24. So also adulterous thoughts, covetousness and hatred are

embryonic sins, and so must be forgiven.—Mat. 5:21-32. In Africa, an ignorant heathen man became so afflicted over his sins that he had to apologize to Bishop William Taylor for even feeling hard toward him, although he had never done him any harm. I have heard of persons in this country who had to apologize to others for having hated them, without having done them wrong in fact. The truth is, the purpose itself is the sin. The act itself may never be executed, and if it were performed fully and completely, it might never attain to any vicious or malicious end. But the wrong purpose is there still, and merits condemnation. Even the civil law has come to recognize that purpose is the very essence of a criminal act, and court decisions are based upon it. Killing is not always murder. It is not always murder when a man is incensed. It may be either manslaughter, or mere accident, neither of which is intentional killing. On the other hand, a man's action may result in evil, and great evil, too, without any intentions of evil on his part. A thoughtless word, or a careless deed, have often caused endless trouble between people. Indeed some of the greatest dissensions have arisen from what was intended as a kindness, but was taken as an insult. The cartoons of "Happy Hooligan" are more than a mere joke. Sometimes they are serious and sad facts. On the other hand, the blossoms of evil intentions do not always come to fruitage. A man may have attempted murder and not have succeeded, and might still remain malicious in his heart. In such case he is as guilty of murder as if it had been actually committed. In the former case a

man is not guilty or blameworthy, except perchance it be in the case of criminal carelessness. In all of such instances, a man's own convictions or sense of duty, on the one hand, or his sense of delinquency and demerit, on the other, will approximate more or less closely, the ideal standard of right and wrong. Moreover all of these things modify more or less, a man's sense of delinquency, and also the amount of his delinquency. The degree of poignancy attending one's conviction will be in proportion to the lack of modifying elements or ameliorating circumstances in his conception. Men who have been actively and wilfully wicked, generally have more affliction of feelings than do the merely weak or passively wicked; because they have been purposing against more adverse circumstances. The principal causes of a wicked man's action are within himself; while the principal causes of a weak man's evil conduct are without himself. The former is an active agent, while the latter is mostly a passive instrument; and as every one knows an agent is held responsible far more than is any kind of an instrument, either voluntary or involuntary.

III. The third object of conviction is sinfulness itself. When a man thoroughly considers his sins, he cannot fail to notice the source of his sins, either positively or permissively, which is his own sinful nature. There are two forms of conviction here. The first is a sense of obligation to perform known duty; and the second is a sense of delinquency following the neglect to perform known duty, and also a sense of inner repulsion to, or rejection of, duty. The first of these is always present in every rational man. No

sane man ever gets beyond or away from a present sense of duty. The truth shall make us free, not from a sense of duty, but from a sense of sin, and of sinfulness. When a man realizes the heinousness of actual sins, and their numerousness, and one's proneness to sin, he becomes more and more conscious of his own sinfulness, as a tendency of his own nature.

Conviction as a sense of sinfulness takes on three forms. The first is a sense of need or want. Amanda Smith, the colored lady evangelist, said that her conviction for sanctification was not so much a sense of sinfulness, but a conviction of spiritual need merely. This is true of a great many persons. Many christians live so close to God, or keep the body of sin so thoroughly suppressed, that they scarcely feel the motions of inbred sin. In such cases, they do not feel so much the need of the removal of the carnal mind, or the body of sin, as they realize the lack of proper enthusiasm and executive power in the performance of christian work, or the need of a settled determination for the eradication of an evil nature. This desire sometimes manifests itself as a great longing for a better christian life, a hunger and thirst after righteousness, an unutterable eagerness for a holy and blameless life, and an insatiable yearning to be more useful to God and to humanity. This is a sure prophecy of the coming and fullness of the Spirit, and the demand for a soul-satisfying portion, which can never be found except in the abiding presence and power of the Holy Ghost.

Another form in which the sense of sinfulness manifests itself is in the consciousness of the sinful condi-

tion of the soul, and in a sense of its consequent demerit. There is a feeling of condemnation that comes to men when they realize that they are not what they ought to be, either in ability or in character. When Isaiah beheld the spiritual condition and conduct of celestial beings, he was humiliated by a sense of his own shortcomings. Spontaneously he cried out, "woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips."—Isa. 6:5. Peter felt the same way, when he saw the miraculous power of Christ evidenced by the great draft of fishes. He involuntarily cried out, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man."—Luke 5:8. Men instinctively seem to feel that the power to work miracles accompanies, or at least is dependent upon, a holy life. Moreover a manifestation of the presence and power of God begets a deep sense of one's own sinfulness. When Job was arguing with his carping critics, his answers were tinged somewhat with self-righteousness, so that he laid himself liable to the charge of Pharisaism. But when he was brought face to face with God, he felt and talked far different. When God spoke to him, Job did not try to argue the matter, or to justify himself, but humbly said, "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."—Job 40:4. God convicts men of their great sinfulness by manifesting to them His own nature and character; by showing them the depth and breadth of His word; by letting the Spirit search the condition and contents of their heart and soul; and by revealing to them both the secret and presumptuous sins in their lives. These two kinds of sin reveal more than anything else the

real nature of men as to their moral character. Secret sins show very clearly the hidden state and love of the heart; on the other hand, presumptous sins reveal most clearly the wilfulness and stubbornness of the will, in determining to plunge on into sin, in spite of light, warning and restraint. Secret sins show that although men appear all right to the world, they are inwardly wicked and crooked, and love sin. Men guilty of secret sins while professing to be christians, are more anxious to appear right unto men than unto God. Such people are good on the outside, but vile and wicked on the inside. They try to please men more than they try to please God. They have a splendid reputation, but a degenerate character.

Still another form and evidence of the conviction of sinfulness is a sense of unfitness for the full requirements of God's law, and for the perfect performance of christian duty. This takes one of two forms. Sometimes it is a feeling of a lack of goodness, and a full conformity to all the will of God; and sometimes it is a consciousnes of one's inability, or a feeling of a lack of power for the performance of one or more duties. One does not feel that he is able to "run through a troop or leap over a wall."—II Sam. 22:30. This was probably what Paul meant when he said, "And who is sufficient for these things?"—II Cor. 2:16. For even christians unsanctified often feel a lack of adequate power to meet all the emergencies of life.

Most sinners with strong habits feel their inability to meet the grosser temptations of life, unless girded with a power beyond their own. The same is true

of men in nearly every line of christian work. Moses pleaded that he lacked the eloquence and influence to cope with the court of Pharaoh.—Ex. 4:10f. The conscious lack of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is responsible for the sense of the inability to do God's will. But the consciousness of actual sin, or of sinfulness, is responsible far more than is the lack of the abiding presence of the Spirit. Although Moses was a good man, and God's own choice as an ambassador to Pharaoh, he keenly felt his inability and unfitness when he received the Lord's command to reprove Pharaoh, and bring Israel out of Egypt. He said, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"—Ex. 3:11.

All of the disciples shrank before the task of evangelizing the world till they were filled with Spirit, and strengthened with might in the inner man. The fact is, some men who are filled with the Spirit still feel their unworthiness and unfitness to perform some of the high and holy functions of the christian ministry. Although Scripture says that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, he felt that he was neither fit to baptize Jesus Christ, nor to perform menial acts for Him. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear."—Mat. 3:11. So it is seen that even the best of men often feel a sense of their unworthiness. Yet God commands them in spite of their unworthiness to be and do good. The fact is, this feeling of unworthiness is an evidence that a man

is where God wants him to be, especially in humility. For God cannot use a man when he becomes exalted and self-righteous. And when humble men lose their humility, and when faithful men forsake their obedience, God casts them off, and refuses to use them any longer. When Jesus came to be baptized, "John forbade Him saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Moreover sinners feel the same toward Christ. The centurion at Capernaum desired to have his servant healed. He introduced his prayer with a confession of unworthiness, and declared, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."—Mat. 8:8. But Christ commended this spirit of humility very highly. God "resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble."

This suggests two other points. This feeling of unworthiness usually takes one of two forms. One manifests itself when God wants a man or a woman to do something for Him; and they feel that they are unable to do justice to the task. Therefore they shrink from the task, possibly on account of its greatness; and possibly on account of a feeling of insufficiency of the strength of man to perform it well. Men often feel that they are insufficient to do for others in position what ought to be done, or do it well enough for them. The second form is, when God wants to do something for a man, and the man himself would like to have it done, too. Yet in spite of a man's eagerness to have God work His righteous will in him, and for him, he does not feel worthy to receive

what he wants or what God wants to give him, and has promised to him. So he fears that God will not do it for him on account of his unfitness. This varies also. Sometimes it takes the form of a feeling of unworthiness to receive what God might do for him. He almost rejects the favor of God. Some such men have rejected what God has promised them. Men have been heard to declare that they would not repent on their dying bed and offer God the fag-end of a misspent life. But suing for mercy at the last hour honors God with humility and a recognition of His sovereign rights. Others have such a sense of their own unworthiness, that they feel that they do not deserve what God has already done for them. To contrast these sentiments more fully and clearly: One is a feeling that a man is unworthy to do anything for God; and the other is a feeling that one is unworthy of having God do anything for Him.

CHAPTER VII.

The Offices of Conviction.

THE great object of every part of the work of redemption is to save men from sin. To do this they must be made to see and feel the heinousness of sin, that they may become unalterably opposed to it. There are three different works, which mark the three different phases and degrees of God's work for us, in turning the tide of our nature against sin. They are conviction, regeneration and sanctification. The first work is upon the intellect; the second upon the will; and the third upon the affections. The work of redemption begins with the mind, for no one can become redeemed till he has proper conceptions of sin and of righteousness.—John 16:7-11. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."—Prov. 23:7.

Conviction causes within us not only a sense of our duty but also a repulsion toward sin. This is emphasized by that affliction and misery of soul resulting from rebellion against duty, and reproofs of the word and Holy Spirit. In one sense conviction is a work of grace, but in another it is not. It is a work upon the mind, and not upon the soul. It is almost wholly a mental state, and does not necessarily affect the heart at all. Conviction is the combined work of the truth and the Spirit upon the mind. Conviction is for the purpose of awakening and correcting men's views upon religious subjects, more particularly upon the subject

of sin and righteousness; not so much as to notions one has upon these subjects, but as to the attitude of the mind toward them. Conviction is the effort of the Spirit through the truth to properly adjust the mind of man toward God, truth and righteousness.

Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of man to enthrone the will over the moral nature of man, so as to give the soul complete ascendency and dominion over the whole man. Regeneration increases the tide of man's nature against sin and toward righteousness, by implanting in the heart new purposes and desires toward righteousness, besides breaking the dominion of the desires toward evil. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."—I John 3:9; 5:4. Of course regeneration gives a man new views of life, and also changes his affections more or less; but the greatest part of the work is upon the will.

Sanctification eradicates wrong affections from man's nature, and implants good affections which are not present, and strengthens those which are. Sanctification purifies and enlists the affections with the will in its movement toward moral transformation. Sanctification still further swells the current of righteous feelings and purposes, and a holy hatred toward sin; it also removes all secret inclinations of our hearts toward the world. Regeneration works mostly upon the will; but sanctification upon the heart.

I. There are several reasons why conviction is needed and required in every one who begins the christian life. In the first place, should one be led by feelings

only, all of his conduct would be the result of his impulses. There is but little moral quality in merely following our feelings. For nearly all people do what they like to do, no matter whether they are christians or not. A man has to do more than that to show that he is a christian. "Do not even the publicans the same?"—Mat. 5:46. Then moral feelings are fluctuating, as well as are other kinds of feelings. One day it would be one thing, and the next day it would be something else. Emotions are moved, and moved more or less by environment. Then if moral action were based upon feelings only, that would put the moving and molding influence and the springs of moral action over and around us, instead of within us. And so in that case, we would be entirely at the mercy of our environment. Furthermore, under the influence of the world and the devil, the major portion of our impulses would be very liable to be on the wrong side of moral questions. It takes something more than fitful fickle feelings to direct and sustain the moral conduct of mankind.

In the second place, if one were moved and directed by will alone, all of his actions would be characterized by a coldness, and apparent selfishness and indifference. There will be no particular attraction in the conduct; for the will alone never attracts. But it may and does subdue. The action of the will alone is seen in senseless stubbornness and contrariness; where it is nearly always repulsive. Then mere will-worship is opposed in Col. 2:23. Will-worship does not enlist the heart. So it does not fulfill that supreme command, "to love the Lord with all thy heart." Will wor-

ship is mere formality. And formal religion always lacks soul. The truth is, mere formality kills vital religion. Emotion gives it life and soul. As Christ and his apostles magnified love, so much did they magnify the emotions.

In the third place, intellect alone is discounted in I Cor. 1-3. Right religion renovates the threefold nature of man. God appeals to all three natures of man. No one of them is neglected or discounted. Sentiment and intelligence attract each in its own way and degree to different people. Emotion attracts provided it is directed by intellect, and controlled by will. Without proper direction and control, emotion is not attractive; yea, even love itself is not only not attractive, but may be positively repulsive. We have a good example of this in the soft sentimental love of the senseless and silly. This necessary direction and control of the emotions are dependent upon the convictions. Without definite settled convictions there is but little if any of either direction or control. So then clear and settled convictions secure for moral conduct certainty, precision and attraction.

Christ likened those who were led solely by their impulses to the seeds which fell upon the stony ground, and which forthwith sprang up because they had no deepness of earth.—Mat. 13:5. These receive the word with joy; but they fall away as easily as they repent, and almost as quickly. Feelings are both variable and fleeting; and whatever depends upon them are just as variable and fleeting as they are.—Mat. 13:20f. Emotional people are usually fickle, and fickle people are always emotional. But Bible convic-

tion tends to enlist all of a man's being. This secures precision and attraction, certainty and momentum to all moral conduct.

II. There is another reason for the importance which conviction plays in the christian life. It is God's purpose and plan to have our whole nature set against sin, just as He desires us to love Him with all our hearts. He requires us "to abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good."—Rom. 12:9. Thorough conviction combines the sense of the unrighteousness of all wrong, and a feeling of hatred which men ought to have toward it. If conviction is acted upon, it will lead to thorough repentance, and to complete loyalty to God. And that is why so many christians who were formerly the most grievous sinners become the most faithful and devoted christians. Pungent conviction and oppressive affliction have burned out all desires for the fleshpots of Egypt, which had formerly possessed their hearts. It is not that conviction performs a work of grace in their souls; but the bitter fruits of sin, as well as a sense of the heinousness of sin, thoroughly sicken the soul of sin.

The Lord does not want us to have confused conceptions of right and wrong. For the lack of clear and settled convictions of right and wrong render people liable to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."—Eph. 4:14. This condition of intellectual and moral uncertainty also renders them more liable to the temptations of Satan. For many of the temptations of men are due to their ignorance of the plain teachings of the Scriptures, of the general principles of righteousness, and of their personal re-

lations and obligations. We must never make the mistake of supposing that sufficient and proper instruction will remove all difficulties and temptations. For it will never do it. But it will remove many of them. On the other hand, proper knowledge and instruction, instead of removing all temptations, occasionally becomes of itself a source of temptation. Paul said, "Love edifieth, (or buildeth up), but knowledge puffeth up."—I Cor. 8:1. So knowledge itself becomes a source of pride, against which Paul warns the Corinthian brethren.

Then the desire for knowledge may become a source of temptation. It leads some to make needless sacrifices and questionable experiments, to gain knowledge. The Serpent tempted Eve by making her believe that she did not understand the nature of God, or the actual result of eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She did not yield to the temptation to eat of the forbidden fruit until she was persuaded to believe that what God had said in regard to the consequences of such disobedience, was entirely wrong. This implied either that God did not understand, or that He wilfully misrepresented the facts to Adam and Eve. Hosea echoed the same truth, when he said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."—4:6 So some temptations are due to ignorance, and some are due to knowledge.

Real knowledge of sin begets a hatred of sin. "Vice is a monster of such frightful mien, that to be hated needs but to be seen." Some learn to detest it most heartily, when they see the awful ravages and results of sin. Many have seen and felt the results of

sin who have not been guilty of the kind of sin that they most hate. The inmates of a drunkard's home most cordially hate liquor, and yet many of them have never touched the accursed stuff. This is a conviction that comes from observation, and is purely derived from a judgment formed from what one has suffered not in soul, but in body and mind. The drunkard himself suffers from the direct effects of whisky, and his family from the indirect effects. The drunkard suffers in body, mind and soul; while the family suffer in body and mind. The drunkard suffers in conscience; the other in mental anxiety, hunger, cold and bruises. When one suffers from the pains and pangs of a guilty conscience, or in body or mind from the results of their own sins, the form of their conviction is quite different from that derived from observing the sins of other people, or suffering indirectly from sin.

III. It is not enough to turn from wicked ways. Respectable sinners may do that, and still be as wicked in heart as ever. The fact is, respectable sinners are the most hard-hearted ones. To preserve respectability a man must refrain from the coarser sins. And the respectable man feels that he deserves large credit for conquering his worst temptations. He does not realize that it is pride that inspired his respectability, and not his desire for righteousness; and that the difference he makes in his sins shows that he is trying to please men rather than God. For when a man loves God and righteousness, there is no difference in sins to him then. The unrighteous man must forsake his thoughts. In his unregenerate state, man rolls sin as a sweet morsel under his tongue till it be found hateful

in his sight. Most sins are sweet and dear to the men who practice them. They must not only be led to quit sin, they must be made to hate it, and to hate it so much, that they will forever cease to desire it. There are three ways in which this may be done. The first is the results of sin, making men sick of it. The bitter experiences of men with sin here in this world, and the awful retribution which it brings, sometimes makes men hate it most cordially. When the prodigal son realized that he was "down and out," he knew for himself that "the way of the transgressor is hard."—Prov. 13:15. The fear of coming judgment and the righteous wrath of God may and often does cause one to flee from sin to escape from coming retribution. But God tries to hasten and emphasize our aversion to sin by making us realize its exceeding sinfulness. This He does by sending the Spirit to apply the word to our hearts with such force, pertinency and pungency that we may see not only the righeousness of the divine law, but also our great lack of conformity thereto. Severe and pungent conviction does both of these for us. It is God's desire, purpose and effort to cure us forever of all our hankering after evil, and to break us completely of the sinning habit. The stronger and more pungent our convictions are, the more thoroughly will this be done. So conviction is one of the most important works that God does for man in weaning him from sin. Thorough reformation is not complete without it.

IV. Some people expect too much of conviction, or at least attribute too much to it. While conviction is a part of the process of salvation, it is not salvation

itself, and especially it is not salvation from sin. But conviction is redemption from the insensibility or our unconsciousness of sin and its sinfulness. Some short-sighted people have said that if a person has old-time Bible conviction, he will quit the sinning business. That is never strictly true. It may be partially true, or it may not. Such people also sometimes teach that if a man is not entirely sanctified he cannot cease from all sin. They never seem to think of the inconsistency between their two statements. Their statement not only makes conviction a state of grace, but makes it a state of grace higher than that of regeneration. Their statement implies that if a man has real conviction he will quit all sin; but if he is regenerated he cannot, or at least will not, cease from sin. One might wonder what regeneration does for a man if it does not help him more than conviction. They seem to fail to recognize the fact that conviction is a condition of the mind rather than a state of grace in the heart. So it is easily seen by any thoughtful person that confusion as to conviction will necessarily cause confusion as to regeneration and sanctification, too.

In the first place, in the strictest sense of the word, conviction is not a state of grace, or a spiritual state at all. It is almost purely a mental state. It may consist with or without any religious desires, or with or without any moral purpose, or with or without any change of heart, or state of grace. The truth is, it may exist with any phase or degree of either penitence or impenitence; with any state of grace or with no state of grace. It not only may do so; it has often done so; it is so recorded in both sacred and profane writings.

In the second place, some persons under real Bible conviction, so named or rather described in the Scriptures, have repented while others have not. Inspiration records that when Peter's sermon was preached on the day of Pentecost, his hearers "were pricked in their heart."—Acts 2:37. The word says that some, as many as gladly received the word, were baptized and added to the Church. There were tens of thousands of Jews in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, but only three thousand of them accepted Christ. All of them knew about this; many more of them heard the word itself, but did not accept it. Scripture does not say that all that heard the word were cut to the heart. Neither does it say that all that heard the word were baptized; but they that received the word gladly were baptized. The form of the statement indicates that some of them that heard the word did not hear it gladly, neither were baptized.

After the apostles had been imprisoned, and then released by an angel, they were arrested and brought before the council, where they preached a sermon on free speech, and obedience to God. The narrative says that when the councillors heard the defense of the apostles, "they were cut to the heart." But they did not repent. On the contrary, "they took counsel to slay them."—Acts 5:33. It took an eloquent and forcible speech on the part of Gamaliel, to secure for the apostles even a temporary respite from persecution. And this respite was only temporary. When this same council heard the defense of Stephen, which was nothing more than a strong gospel sermon, "they were cut to the heart" again. Although

they could not gainsay his arguments, and were cut to the heart, this pungent conviction did not lead them to repentance at all. It rather made them the more determined in their impenitence. For the very same verse that describes their pungent conviction, also says, "they gnashed upon him with their teeth." —Acts 7:54. Here in the very beginning of the Pentecostal dispensation, were recorded three instances of old-time Bible conviction, which are undoubted, expressed in almost the same terms, which shows that each of these cases was thorough and pungent. All were extreme cases. None of them were moderate or superficial. Each instance was caused by the preaching of the word by the apostles or early disciples. In each case the word was accompanied by the unction and power of the Holy Ghost. In each case the men saw themselves in the light of God's truth. In each case they were cut to the heart. And yet in only **one** case did the hearers repent, and not all of them. This shows that those fanatics who make such extreme statements have the recorded facts of Scripture against them in the ratio of two to one. Conviction may always be resisted; yea, it very frequently is resisted, and that very effectively, too.

In the third place, most men who have rejected the call of God, resisted the Holy Ghost, and refused to come to Christ, have usually resisted more conviction than that under which most christians have accepted Christ. Just mark those in every revival meeting who have suffered the most poignant convictions. They are usually not those who have ac-

cepted Christ, but those who have rejected Him. This leaves them without any excuse. There is reason for the greater conviction on the part of those who resist the truth. It is very much like fighting a porcupine. The more one fights, the more he gets wounded. When a man resists the arrows of conviction, the more the arrows are thrust into him. That was Paul's experience. So the Lord warned him against kicking against the pricks. The more he resisted the more he suffered. Peace of mind and soul is found in humble submission to the divine requirements.

These extreme views are usually held by those who desire to humble and bring under conviction those who disagree with them in doctrine or practice. This inclines them to set up a standard higher than or different from the Bible. When they recognize the fact that some people live up to the Bible standard, and said fanatics still want to bring them under conviction, they recognize the fact that they must set a standard higher than the Bible, or different from it. So it is easy to see that it springs from a desire to discount others disliked or feared. It springs from hate and not from love, and shows a desire to exalt self and not Christ. But it makes upon a great many persons whose thinking is superficial an impression of superior piety, whereas it is simply a cloak for concealing hypocrisy and malice. It is unjust to make attacks upon persons who are living good moral, and possibly earnest christian lives above reproach, just to bring them under conviction, or into subjection to others. They have been known to discount the

blameless and at the same time to uphold and defend those who were living lives of sin, just because such persons agreed with themselves.

They follow such a course for several reasons. The first reason is that they may defeat somebody who disagrees with them, or those whom they are unable to convince in argument. This is an easy way to denounce those whom one does not like, and fails to influence in any other way. The second object is to bring to the altar those who profess to be christians, but have been converted under the ministry of some other evangelist or preacher, or belong to some other church. If they can succeed, it is considered to be a feather in their cap. Third, they desire to win or discount everybody who disagrees with them in doctrine, practice or profession. Such have an itching desire to have every one seek either pardon or purity in their meetings, who does not agree with them or conform to their standards. Such people usually have a spirit of vain glory, in leading people of different views, or of different denominations to seek a religious experience at their altars or in their revival meetings. It all springs from a love of self instead of a love of the souls of others.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Manifestations of Conviction.

EVERY manifestation of religion is due either to feeling or purpose. And every religious thought and feeling has a manifestation peculiar to itself. As every sound produces a different vibration of the atmosphere, so every wave of thought and feeling has a method all its own by which it reports itself to the world. Conviction is no exception to the general rule. But the different forms and degrees of conviction have different forms of manifestation. Chronologically conviction is the first of all religious emotions. While most of the manifestations of conviction are purely natural and involuntary, much of its manifestation is voluntary and studied. This is especially the case when one is hesitating about acting upon its requirements, or is rejecting it, or resisting it. The soul that is under conviction assumes three or four different attitudes toward the truth, varying according to its own nature, and according to the environment and associations of the convicted one.

The first two classes are those which are the direct opposites of each other. These are the class of those who are seeking the truth, and that of those rejecting or resisting it. Then between these two extremes there are two classes which are very similar to each other. These classes are those who are hesitating about accepting the truth, and those who are

simply open to the truth, and are neither seeking nor rejecting it, but will receive whatever is given. There are some who are glad and willing to hear the truth; but they do not care for the truth to benefit their own souls. They want to know the truth for the sake of knowledge, and not for the sake of righteousness or usefulness.

I. The attitude which a seeking soul under conviction assumes toward the truth depends very much upon the degree of conviction, personal temperament, previous life, and present environment. As all of these vary in every soul, so their manifestations vary accordingly and correspondingly. Part of the variation depends upon one's nature and disposition; and part upon the influences forced upon it from without.

1. The first attitude of an honest soul seeking the truth is generally that of sobriety and thoughtfulness. Thoughtfulness and deliberation are not only the attitudes of one seeking the truth; they are the principal means of attaining the truth. And the lack of proper consideration is responsible for so much want of serious purpose and righteousness. Isaiah could not account for the foolish headlong sinfulness of his people except by supposing they "did not consider."—Isa. 1:3. Their first step toward reformation would be serious consideration. Isaiah calls a halt to their reckless rush toward evil by exhorting, "Come now, let us reason together."—1:8. Proper consideration will cause many a man to wake up to his present spiritual condition and to his future retribution. When the prodigal came to himself in his mad career, he of his own accord resolved upon repentance and refor-

mation. He needed no admonition nor exhortation, and received none. Several times Haggai exhorted the Jews to "consider your ways."—1:5, 7; 2:15, 18. Proper thinking, especially if from a right purpose, is very apt to produce right acting. This thoughtfulness springs from some conviction, and brings more. Deliberation upon religious themes will manifest itself in several ways. The Scriptures mention several ways in which religious meditation reports itself to the world. These are silence and thoughtfulness on the one hand, and at other times and on the other hand, inquisitiveness and a disposition to talk upon religious subjects.

Meditation is not only an occasional cause of conviction; it is also a usual result and accompaniment. This will cause a searching of the Scriptures, a review of one's past life, a pondering of one's present course, and a recollection and application of many truths previously read and heard. Meditation as a means of moral adjustment is so often overlooked and neglected. The Psalmist said very appropriately, "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments."—Ps. 119:59f. If any one can be persuaded to stop and meditate upon his ways, his repentance and reformation are almost assured. For this reason, some evangelists persuade sinners whom they wish to win, to read the Bible or some other good book, and to consider the subject of personal responsibility.

Sometimes the newly awakened soul seeking light and salvation will observe a profound and sacred

silence. This attitude or manner usually marks the exceedingly meditative man, and sometimes the stolid, stubborn man deeply impressed with his own exceeding sinfulness, but who is not yet fully seeking the Lord. Silence is very often one of the signs of serious thoughtfulness. The man who is greatly absorbed in his own moral problems is more than likely to be very quiet and uncommunicative. It is also true of many under conviction.

At some stage in the process of seeking salvation, the soul will not only search for truth for its own benefit, but will also seek the assistance of such others as he thinks have sought and found either truth or experience. Every seeker after truth or the christian life is naturally in an inquiring mood. And inquisitiveness often follows thoughtfulness. Nicodemus did as most men would do under new religious impressions. He made inquiry of one who he thought was a competent and authoritative teacher. The penitents of Pentecost and the Philippian jailer made no forced or merely deliberate inquiries; they simply followed the impulses of newly awakened souls. Severe and pungent conviction usually presses inquiries as well as prayer from the seeking soul. The penitents of Pentecost and the Philippian jailer were not the only ones who inquired the way of salvation. Multitudes and millions have done so since their day, and numbers did before them.—Acts 2:37; 16:30.

In most convicted or penitent souls there is at some time or other a disposition to talk upon religious subjects with some one, preferably with an intimate friend. Most penitents will discuss their religious

difficulties with an intimate friend in whose religious integrity, wisdom and experience they have confidence. While some penitents prefer to discuss their obstacles and difficulties with an intimate friend or acquaintance, others are shy of them, and prefer to make confidants of absolute strangers. This depends upon their disposition and the state of their case, and the probable treatment which they expect from their friends and acquaintances. If they doubt the probity of their friends, or their judgment or mercy, they will very likely prefer a stranger to an acquaintance. For they fear the prejudices of mere acquaintances. Some convicted people do not desire to make confidants of old acquaintances, who they fear will reveal their confidences, or make stock of their confessions. Too often such fears and prejudices are well-founded. For so many people are very much lacking in a sense of honor as to keeping confidences. Some have the littleness to boast of the sacred confidences communicated to them to show the estimation in which they are held. But their very boast and betrayal only reveal their unworthiness of confidence. Such people are not fit to deal with seeking souls at any stage of their inquiry. Many a person when made aware of such betrayal has been driven back into skepticism, distrust and disgust. One young man under deep conviction utterly refused to come to the altar when urged to do so by another young man. He afterward acknowledged that he wanted to become a christian, but declared that he would not come to the altar when that young man asked him to do so, for he would tell it all over town the next day.

When burdened with a keen sense of sinfulness and guilt, men have been known to rise in the night, and seek some minister or christian friend for comfort or counsel, or both; and to ask for prayer for their own salvation. Very often men interested in religious subjects will open up the discussion of spiritual things in a general sort of a way, without mentioning their own feelings or interest in religious teachings. This is usually done for one of two reasons. One reason is because they think they can get a more unbiassed view to leave their own case out of account. The other reason is some men do not care to reveal the state of their own mind in regard to religious things on account of pride or self-interest. Then penitents sometimes fear lest the world should take advantage of them should it know of their penitence, and should make stock of them and their sad case.

2. When there is a consciousness of having committed some great wrong, or of having lived a very sinful life, or when there is a fear of soon having to suffer for one's sins, either here or hereafter, conviction may manifest itself in fear and trembling. The fact is, this form of conviction usually arises from the anticipation of coming retribution either from men or from God. The Philippian jailer evidently felt that a great wrong had been done to Paul and Silas. His course toward them after he was awakened religiously, indicated that very clearly. The significance of this conviction was emphasized by the fact that the jailer was not the principal actor in this tragic crime, but only an accomplice. That is not all. His official position was such that he was almost compelled to play

the part which he did. He was an almost helpless tool, and not a voluntary agent. But neither political nor social, neither business nor religious relations, make sin, crime or injustice excusable. If it did, his conviction would not have been so pungent. Nevertheless his participation in this act of injustice condemned his soul for even permitting the incarceration of the innocent. God holds us responsible, not only for all the sins which we commit, but also for many, if not for all, which we could prevent others from committing. Felix realized only too painfully that he had violated the two great principles of Paul's sermon, rightousness and temperance, and was almost sure to suffer from the judgment to come. That was the reason he trembled. But trembling does not signify repentance. For the devils also tremble as well as do penitents.

Sometimes great fear comes from the fact that one has sinned against great light in the form of strong gospel preaching, and a former very high or bright religious experience, and especially the latter. It frequently occurs that when one has had a very bright religious experience, that fact and also the fact of his having preached straight to others in former times reverberates through his conscience, and causes him to tremble. It is usually very easy to bring those who have had very bright religious experiences under strong convictions. The convictions of such are not only a consciousness of moral obligation, but also the painful sense of dereliction.

3. When a soul has long been in the throes of doubt and despair, or has long been yearning for a

better life, or has become thoroughly sick of sin, it eagerly grasps at any religious truth presented that promises hope or help. Like the proverb that a drowning man will grasp at a straw, so will a despairing soul under conviction grasp at anything that will offer the faintest hope of escape from the thraldom and the condemnation of sin. Sometimes these preceding conditions may exist without much particular sense of the soul's obligation to God. The heathen, oppressed with a sense of his own weakness and need, or suffering from the indulgence of his own appetites and passions, or from sensual dissipation, the gratification of which he fancies his own heathen god, not only does not condemn, but even favors and approves, even if he does not command, gladly seeks relief when it is offered. After long struggling with habits which he has been taught to tolerate, and even indulge, but has found to be injurious, he earnestly desires deliverance therefrom. When dreading the doom of dark despair of ever gaining deliverance from his bondage to evil habits, the gospel of the grace of God comes as a balm to his suffering sinful soul. This is the reason why so many heathen, and some who are strangers to the grace of God in nominal christian lands, receive the gospel so eagerly and gladly when it is first presented.

As a rule, those who have heard the gospel continuously or repeatedly without accepting it, rarely ever receive it with joy when they do accept. Such generally yield slowly and with great reluctance when they do yield. For continued or repeated resistence hardens the heart. But intelligent and willing yield-

ing at any time will soften it. The shallow and the fickle represented by the stony-ground hearers receive the gospel with joy. The penitents of Pentecost received the word gladly when it was given with new light, life and power. Many of the hearers at that feast were there for the purpose of seeking new light and life. This brings forward another fact, and that is, when any man or woman is seeking new light, life, experience or power, they welcome anything that seems to promise help to either mind or soul. This class may have frequently heard before, and may have been seeking long before, or may have resisted before, but now their whole purpose and attitude toward righteousness is changed, and they receive with gladness what they formerly rejected.

II. The next class is that of those who resist conviction. Those who resist conviction usually try to hide it. Most men, and probably all, who resist conviction, do not care to have the world know that they are resisting convictions for sin, or that they have any such convictions. The manner in which they resist convictions depends for the most part upon the same conditions which make or mold the manifestations of the truth-seekers. These same conditions will induce the same kind of manifestations in some instances, and very different in others. Personal pride will seek to crush all outward manifestations of conviction, or at least divert attention from it, no matter whether the subject is seeking or rejecting. There are numbers of persons who will seek the Lord secretly, and try to hide their feelings and interest from everybody, even from their dearest friends.

1. The first class of those who resist conviction is that of those who simply try to throw off the influence for the time being, generally because they are not yet ready to surrender. They are not hostile to truth as truth. In fact they expect to accept it sometime, but not now. Their mind is fully made up to two things. One thing is that they fully intend to accept the truth sometime; and the other is that they do not intend to accept it now. They do not oppose those who desire to receive the truth now or at any other time. They may even encourage those who desire to receive the truth at the present. Such often show a noble spirit in every way except in their present rejection of truth. But as for themselves, their present purpose and effort is to divert their own mind, and at the same time to parry the blows, thwart the purposes, and divert the attention of others, who are interested in their religious welfare.

To attain this end, some will assume an air of gayety and frivolity. Persons thoughtful, well-behaved and steady at other times, will act very silly and appear perfectly giddy, when resisting the sense of their obligation to God and when trying to divert public attention from their own mental and moral state. There are two reasons for this. One is for the purpose of throwing off the influence of divine truth upon their consciences, which oppresses, embarrasses, and annoys them. Another reason is their desire to conceal this embarrassment, and their sense of sin from others. So such people under conviction usually act the very opposite of the way they feel, or at least try to do so. Nevertheless this very attempt

to act differently clearly advertises their own mental state to those who know and understand. For a man under no particular conviction does not feel any necessity to act differently. Their endeavor to appear and act differently does not prevent the truth from having its intended power over such. Indeed truth sometimes has more influence when it is resisted than when it is accepted. Resistance to truth often makes it more impressive to the one who resists it. For that reason one can often impress an enemy with his integrity more than he can his friend. The friend expects good conduct, but the enemy does not, and so it means more to him.

There is another class of persons, who from a sense of honesty or for other reasons, would not act contrary to their feelings to deceive others, but would merely freeze and choke their religious feelings. These people assume an air of stoical indifference. Their aim and effort are not so much to disguise their feelings as it is to feel as they want to appear. They are too honest and sober-minded to act contrary to their feelings. But they do try to act indifferently, and try to feel likewise. Felix was just trying to divert public attention and conceal his own anxiety. The Athenians manifested an indifference concerning the doctrine of Christ and His resurrection. They had a curiosity to know the truth. Yet they feared its influence and obligations. These reasons prompted their proposal of the postponement of the present discussion. They were very polite about it. They would not openly reject the truth. They would just quietly ignore it. Their postponement was in reality an evasion of the

question in a polite way. Their aim was to show a seeming courtesy, and at the same time get rid of hearing embarrassing addresses without offending the speaker.

2. The opposition to the truth and right by the second great class of those hostile to the truth is more pronounced than the first. They hate the truth, its exponents and expounders. Their hatred may be prompted by a personal pride, self-interest, self-righteousness, or by a sense of their own sinfulness, and its consequent demerits. The scribes and the Pharisees were bitter against Christ and His truth. His own pure life and clean-cut truth revealed their innate wickedness. The world saw only their words and outward actions. Christ saw their inner life and spirit, and discovered it to the world. This piqued their pride and vanity, and angered them. For they saw that He knew their hearts, and they feared that others would see what He saw, or would discern it through His accurate and incisive delineation of crooked character.

It is easier to hinder or injure the expounder of the truth than it is to hurt or hinder the truth itself. Moreover an evil-doer always hates the truth-teller more than he does the truth. Truth stated is only truth in the abstract; while truth embodied in a good life is truth in a concrete form. Abstract truth cannot think, feel or suffer; its exponents and expounders can do all of them. The enemies of Christ ceased to oppose His truth and doctrine, but continued to seek His life. They soon saw their inability to disprove His truth or to stop its onward march. At the last,

their only answer to His questions and arguments was a jibe or a sneer. They would not accept His message. They could not answer its argument. But they saw that they could stop its messenger.

The persecutors of Stephen were vexed at his manifest superiority to them in life, doctrine and ability as an exponent and expounder of divine truth. They were not able to gainsay nor resist his wise answers to their queries and sophistries. As is always the case, when malicious men see no hope of defeating their opponent in argument, they begin to seek to injure their opponent either politically, ecclesiastically or physically. They killed both Stephen and Christ both ecclesiastically and physically. But they failed to kill their influence. Sometimes such persecution increases rather than kills or even decreases the influence of the innocent victims of the unrighteous wrath of wicked men. But all this wicked manifestation of their malice only made more manifest their own wickedness, and their resistance to truth.

3. The class of people just discussed is not only hostile to the truth, but pugnacious. The class now to be considered is also hostile, but not so pugnacious. These opponents to the truth are not loud and demonstrative in their opposition to it. But they maintain a sullen and stubborn silence when they feel the proddings and probings of divine truth. They do not fight the truth and the truth-seeker and the truth-teller so much as they try to protect themselves from its searching exposures and obligations. They simply play the part of a wise shell-fish. They shut themselves up in their shell, and refuse to come out within

the reach of the gospel hook or spear. Their mind is occupied not so much with the rejection of truth and its expounders as it is with their own protection. They are not so malicious as they are selfish.

There is another class of people somewhat similar to the former. They are those who think that men deal unjustly with them, and that some declarations intended for them are not fair to them. So they refuse to receive the truth or to hear it. They think the seeming injustice of the truth to them in its perverted application to them, justifies them in their rejection of it. There are many persons who recognize the fact that the preachments directed at them do not apply to them. In such cases they feel perfectly justified in its rejection. It does not belong to them. To this class belong also those people who quietly ignore the truth that they hear, and avoid opportunities for hearing any more. They not only ignore the truth, but they try to banish it from their minds. They try to be and act indifferent to the truth.

The man found at the supper without his wedding garment on was speechless when accosted by his lord. As with him, very often this class of hearers maintain silence because they are not able to give a reasonable answer to the questions or arguments of their opponents. More than once it is said that Christ's enemies durst not ask Him any more questions, nor say anything more to Him, Mat. 22:46; Mk. 12:34; Luke 20:40. Neither did they give Christ any more opportunities to question them. They simply avoided all opportunities for conflict with him in any way, like many others under conviction.

III. The next general class of persons in regard to the truth is that of the deliberating. It is naturally to be expected that when any man is hesitating under deep conviction of sin that his outward conduct or manner will partake of the nature of the manifestations of both the other classes, but mostly of the manner of those who are seeking. But when men are hesitating or deliberating about taking some definite religious action, their present attitude is apt to be that of inactivity and variableness. The qualities which are apt to characterize the doubtful or hesitating are those of the thoughtful. These qualities are sobriety and meditation, fear and trembling, and occasional inquisitiveness and talkativeness. The two most prominent characteristics of the hesitating are thoughtfulness and fear. The merely hesitating are always thoughtful.

The convicted who are hesitating are divided into two general classes; one is the serious, and the other is the careless. The first class comprises those who are under deep conviction, and are deliberating whether they will make an immediate start in the christian life, or defer all definite action to some future time, when they expect to make a full and final commitment of all they have and are to God. This class under favorable circumstances will usually accept and assume the obligations of divine truth upon them, for to this class belong the thoughtful, steady and purposeful. They are the material that usually makes substantial christians. The second class includes those who are neither anxious nor deliberating. They are not seeking for light, truth nor duty; nor yet do they inten-

tionally reject it. They are simply open to what light comes to them, not as a matter of enlightenment, direction or inspiration, but as matter of mere courtesy for the messenger, or of mere curiosity for the truth. Their principal aim is simply to know how to meet the truth, without considering its relation to themselves. And this causes them but little or no anxiety.

1. People under deep conviction for their sins, and hesitating about beginning the christian life, are usually thoughtful. Indeed it is difficult if not almost impossible to divert the minds of such from the sense of their own sinfulness, from the problems of life and death, immortality and eternity, from the thoughts of future rewards and punishments, and of their own responsibility to God. Whatever else comes up, and attracts their attention for the time being, their minds always swing back to these great problems. There is a natural gravitation of real religious conviction toward serious thoughts and eternal truths. When in such a mental and spiritual condition, persons under conviction rarely open up a conversation upon such topics except for diversion or rest, information or courtesy. The Spirit presses the problems of the soul's eternal salvation and obligation upon their minds for a full and final settlement, and resists any interruption or hindrance of the process. So thoughtfulness and consequent seriousness are the principal characteristics of this class. It is not the cheerful, happy thoughtfulness, whose thoughts please and entertain; but the sad, sober, serious thoughtfulness, whose only relief is the hope of the penitent and believing, which is salvation from sin through Christ Jesus.

When the soul gets a clear view of its own condition and deficiency in regard to the full demands of a righteous law and a sovereign ruler, it is naturally oppressed with a sense of its own weakness and sinfulness, and of fear and anxiety. There are ordinarily three things which harass the awakened soul with fear and solicitude. The first one is, lest his own sins and sinfulness surpass the love and mercy of God. Hence deep conviction borders on hopelessness, and is complete when the conviction reaches the point of self-despair. The second thing such people fear is, that they have sinned away their day of grace, that they have crossed the dead line, that their doom is already sealed, and that their day of mercy is forever past. A third matter of great anxiety to them is, lest the door of mercy be soon closed to them, and all hope for them be eternally vanished, if it is not already. Most people under deep conviction will be harassed by all these fears, by some of them all of the time, and by all of them some of the time.

After conviction is complete, men need to be impressed with the great mercy and love of God, and with the sufficiency of the atonement in Christ Jesus. Unless the door of mercy is opened to them, they are liable to sink into sullen despair. The preaching of the law alone shuts up men in hopelessness under sin, and hardens them in it. The law must be preached to show men their sinfulness and need, and their absolute dependence upon Christ as their only Savior. Nevertheless when they recognize these points, they need the blood to be applied. Ministers must wound, and then pour in oil. They must kill, and then make

alive. They must convict, and then console. They must shut up under the law, and then must open the door of gospel grace. After men are brought under deep conviction and taste the bitter fruits of sin and repentance, they need the consolations of the gospel applied immediately. Despair, if long continued, hardens men. It should not be forgotten, too, that despair will at first soften men. But if mercy is not shown immediately or soon, men under deep conviction will harden their hearts. Mercy and love offered at the opportune time will soften the heart, even more than will despair. If offered to men before they are under conviction or are penitent, mercy and love will only harden men's hearts. This is manifest when unwise leniency is shown to criminals. It begets hardness and indifference when divine love and mercy are offered to seekers who are not yet fully penitent, or who refuse to make full reparation or restitution. The wise man recognized this when he said, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."—Eccl. 8:11. So prudence must be used in the application of the law, either civil or divine, or of the gospel that they may produce the best effect.

While in this state, and no further, convicted persons rarely ever open a religious conversation or make any inquiries for light, direction or comfort. They will frequently talk and ask questions though when others introduce the subject. The fact is, most people will talk on the subject of religion when the subject is properly introduced, but most people will refuse to

take the initiative. This leaves the subject to be first broached by christian workers. This is frequently an advantage, for it gives them an opportunity to introduce whatever phase of the subject they may think best. When a serious conversation is once begun, it is not always easy to change its course.

2. The second class who hesitate is that of those who are not in earnest, and have no moral purpose. They seek neither spiritual knowledge nor divine grace. They do not seek the truth, and barely give it a civil reception, when it is thrust upon them. But they do not welcome it. They sometimes have a sort of passing purpose to turn to God; but it is neither strong nor abiding. They will perform some religious acts, but it will be in a half-hearted way, and then only to soothe their consciences, and not to save their souls. Such folks are apt to be more or less vacillating, and may become simply a reflection of their environment. When they are with the good, they have aspirations. When with the bad, they are depressed and inclined toward evil. They are usually weak rather than wicked; and are molded from without rather than from within. They are mostly moral products rather than moral agents. The stony-ground hearers usually come from this class. For they have probably an easy and fickle nature to begin with.

PART III

THE MAKING OF MORAL ADJUSTMENTS.

CHAPTER IX.

The Principles of Repentance.

MANY have often thought and said that when Jesus came to earth, He softened the severity of judgment and mitigated the rigor of punishment which were taught in the Old Testament. But such people forget that less than one-tenth of the sermon on the Mount is devoted to the Beatitudes. In the remainder of the sermon the obligation of the moral law is not lightened, neither is any of it set aside. On the contrary, it is more widely and deeply applied. For Christ requires not only good conduct, but also pure thoughts and kind feelings. "God is of purer eyes than to behold evil; and cannot look on iniquity."—Hab. 1:13. He does not allow us to become partakers of other men's sins; neither will He.

The old ceremonial law, so far as it prefigured Christ, was entirely abrogated, when Christ came. The old ceremonial law foreshadowed two fundamental facts. The first fact was men's need of moral purity; and the second was a prophecy and a symbolical promise of the work which Christ was to do for them. The ceremonial law was a picture of what a man ought to be, and what God through Christ

could make him. When the reality is attained, the picture is not valued so highly, but is only a reminder of what God can do or has done. No man when he marries cares to wed a picture. But the picture is retained as a memento, or to look at when one is absent, or the original is dead or gone. So no man ought to want to be wedded to a ceremony.

It seems that many have not noticed that when Christ came, the moral law was applied more faithfully and fully than ever before. The scribes and the Pharisees as a class represented the height of the application of the Mosaic law to the outward life at the beginning of the New Testament dispensation. Yet Christ declared, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." —Mat. 5 : 20. Their righteousness was all outward, and was from selfish motives, and not from the love of both God and man.

The old Mosaic law simply prohibited murder; but the new law did not even permit hatred. The decalogue forbade adultery; but Christ did not allow evil thoughts. The Old Testament disallowed malicious deeds; the New Testament not only forbade unkind thoughts and words and deeds; it went much further, and required us to love our enemies, and to return good for evil. The Old Testament is a manifestation of divine justice; and the New is an exhibition of God's mercy and love. But the justice and holiness of God are neither ignored nor overlooked in the New Testament. Under the New Testament dispensation the moral law of the former dispensation

was not annulled nor abridged in its requirements. The laws of the Old Testament and those of the New were in reality the same; but in the New they were applied more strictly and minutely, because the people then had more light and also more help and inspiration in the gift of the Holy Spirit. The apostle says in regard to the olden times, "Those times of ignorance God winked at."—Acts 17:30. It is said that we establish the law through faith, Rom. 3:31. It might be said that we establish the law through repentance also. God puts His microscope upon the very thoughts, motions and emotions of our hearts and the natural mind, and sees there the germs of all sin, Isa. 55:7.

The love and mercy of God are continually magnified at the expense of His holiness and justice. Christ's forgiveness of the condemned women is persistently paraded in public preaching; while the young man who had kept all the commandments from his youth up, but failed of eternal life because he lacked just one thing, is rarely mentioned. These views are generally held by those who are entirely devoid of spiritual life, or whose religious life is mostly negative or greatly neglected. It was the One who died to save the world, who said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."—Luke 13:3, 5. It was not wrath, but mercy that uttered the warning. Only hatred and wrath would deprive sinful men of any chance whatever. Love gives the struggling sinner another chance to retrieve himself, not grudgingly, but willingly, yea, even anxiously and gladly. Criminal carelessness and cold indifference would let perishing souls go to Per-

dition unwarned of their certain danger. But love would snatch them as brands from the eternal burnings. It is love that warns as well as woos; that rebukes as well as comforts. Hatred does not care what happens to his enemy.

A danger signal is under no obligation to prevent people from running into danger, but is to warn. This is its work, and its only work. If a case of accident comes into court, the railroad is excused if it is proved that the plaintiff received adequate warning. So a preacher is responsible only for warning, and not for saving only the willing. But God requires the watchman on the walls of Zion to warn all under his care and within his reach of their duty to God and to one another, and of the judgment of God upon their neglect of duty.

We must first discuss the general principles of repentance. These furnish the fundamental laws for all moral reformation. In them we see the reasons for cessation from all sin, and for reparation and restitution, and for confession and forgiveness. Our first obligation is toward our own sins, and our next obligation is toward the sins of others. The first duty of men is to cast the beam out of their own eye that they may see clearly to pluck the mote out of their brother's eye. Men ought to practice at home first. This shows that they love righteousness. When men are very anxious for that other fellow to quit stealing or cheating and does not quit himself, it shows that his interest is purely selfish, and it is for the protection of self, and not for the glory of God. But when men are anxious to quit dishonest acts whether anybody

else does or not, it shows that the man is in earnest. All men should forsake and repair their own sins before they can reach those of other people.

Our first duty toward our own sins is to forsake them. Repentance is an attitude of the soul, as well as an act or course of conduct. Repentance is not a cessation of sin for any possible reason, nor a plausible reason, nor even for a moral reason. That is merely reformation. Reformation is very often made for prudential or financial reasons, for social or political ones, and sometimes for the sake of health. Worldly repentance is usually only for what is a temporal benefit. But true repentance is a Godly sorrow for sin, and a complete and final renunciation of all sin, for both moral and spiritual reasons, no matter whether there is any gain or profit from a prudential, financial, commercial, social or hygienic standpoint or not. Real repentance may in fact involve a financial, social or political loss instead of a gain. True repentance requires a complete cessation of the practice of sin. No repentance is either true or complete which does not lead one to forsake all known sin. All partial or temporary renunciation of sin is usually for prudential reasons. A man who renounces one sin, but who at the same time practices another, is not moved by the spirit of love, or truth, but simply by a selfish desire which has for its motive personal gain, and not because it is a spiritual hindrance to his soul, or is hateful to God.

Repentance is not thorough when a man makes only a temporary renunciation of sin. The fact that a man renounces sin only temporarily shows that he

still loves the sin. If he really hated the sin he would renounce it forever. If a man should swear off drinking till next Christmas, when he feels that he cannot forego his usual Holiday spree, it is evident that he has not thoroughly repented of his drunkenness. The fact that his so-called repentance is conditional proves that it is not sincere. Weak and wavering resolutions never brought St. Augustine to complete victory over his besetting sins of drunkenness and licentiousness. After long seeking for salvation, and failing to find it, he seemed to be providentially led to read Rom. 13:13f, the latter of which verses reads, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." There are too many who make provision in all their reformation to enjoy some of the pleasures of sin in some by-path, or in the future. There is no doubt that this is one of the greatest hindrances to success in seeking the Lord. What woman cares to marry a man if he desires to return to some old sweetheart after awhile? No one. Can we suppose that the Lord would care to be wedded to any man who expects or intends to return to the fleshpots of Egypt some day?

When a man renounces one sin and not another, it shows that he still loves the sin which he still practices. True repentance is a hatred of all sin merely because of its sinfulness, and not because of its injuriousness to the sinner or to anybody else, but because it is wrong and hateful and displeasing to God. And all sin is sinful, and is to be hated and renounced because it is sinful. Hatred of sin because of its sinfulness, and not for fear of its punishment, constitutes

the true basis for repentance, yea, and is repentance itself. It is Godly sorrow for sin, and sin alone, that constitutes repentance; and not regret for its punishment directly or indirectly, or for its injurious effects. So when a man really hates sin he loves righteousness. On the other hand, sometimes when a man really repents instead of regretting punishment, he may welcome it as his just desert. When men have repented of their sins they have been known to offer themselves up to civil officers to receive the penalty of the law when they might have escaped. Paul had the same spirit. He declared, "For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die."—Acts 25:11. As long as a man is refusing to suffer his just punishment, or is complaining of what he has suffered for his sin, he has not repented. When David was pelted with stones and dust during his temporary dethronement, a friend wanted to defend him, and punish the miscreant. But David nobly forbade him to do so, and let the fellow continue his insults. He recognized that it was God's will that he should suffer, as it had been so declared by Nathan the prophet.

There are many reasons for forsaking all present and known sin, some of which are here given. It is not necessary to give all; neither does time or space permit it.

I. The very first command of Christ was in regard to repentance, Mat. 4:17. The very fact that God commands it makes it a duty. Deference and obedience to our Creator and moral Governor requires us to heed His commands. The duty of repentance is grounded in the obligation to do the right and eschew

the wrong. An obligation to do the right is also an obligation to cease from wrong. The rule of the Old Testament was, "Cease to do evil; learn to do well."—Isa. 1:16f. The Old Testament expresses merely the required outward conduct. The New Testament is more emphatic still. It shows the attitude required of the inner man, even of the soul. It says, "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."—Rom. 12:9. Nothing could express the strength of the inner purpose and feelings more than does this.

Good and bad, right and wrong, sin and salvation, God and Satan, heaven and hell, are all at opposite poles of the moral universe; so that a man cannot turn toward the one without turning from the other. A man in New York cannot go to Chicago without first leaving New York. One cannot turn to Christ without first forsaking Satan. Christ reproved the young man who wanted to follow Him, but first desired to wait and take care of his father till he died, and then he would follow Him. He said, "Let the dead bury their dead, but come thou and follow me."—Mat. 8:22.

God seeth not as man seeth. God looketh on the heart. Man looketh on the outward appearance. The germs of all sin are found in the carnal condition of the soul. God recognizes that a man's desires toward sin are the seeds of all sin. God puts His microscope on them and sees what will be the final fruitage. He names the desires just what they will finally be, and not what they are. He that hateth his brother is a murderer. Whoso lusteth after the opposite sex is an adulterer. He that coveteth his neighbor's property is a thief. He that exaggerates, prevaricates, or mis-

represents is a liar. One who prefers anything in the whole universe to God himself is an idolater, I Sam. 15:23. And the lukewarm are disgusting and repulsive to a holy God, Rev. 3:15f. Even the irreverent are considered profane. And the careless and indifferent are condemned as criminal and wicked.

The formula for repentance is very clearly, accurately and beautifully stated in Isa. 55:7. The first thing, and the only thing for a sinner to do when beginning the christian life is declared to be: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." It is only after doing these things, that he is really able to "turn to the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God who will abundantly pardon." In the very nature of things, we cannot turn to God till we turn from every known sin. For sin is the desire, plan and act of Satan, and is repulsive to God, and cannot be otherwise. No ship ever tries to leave port till every line is taken in. But there are many who profess to be sailing heavenward who still have numerous ties binding them to this world still uncut. Men can never be christians while they hold more tenaciously to what is wrong, worldly or selfish, than they do to what is right. I once read of a drunken man who got into his boat and rowed all night. When daylight came, he found himself just where he was when he began. He had failed to loose the boat. He declared to himself that it was farther across the river than it ever was before. His rowing was all in vain while his boat was fastened to the bank. So is all the praying, crying, trying, and struggling, in vain, while men are still entangled with affairs of this

world, and yoked up with the world. When the Greeks entered the races they laid aside all their weights. So when christians enter the christian race they must lay aside all their weights as well as their sins. It is absolutely of no use to try to serve God while holding on to the world. God will not recognize a man while he flirts with the world. A foreigner cannot become a citizen of the United States until he has renounced all foreign governments, and especially the one under whose jurisdiction he has been living. The first part of the oath is the renunciation of all former allegiances. Here it is. "I hereby declare on oath that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, and particularly (name sovereign here), of whom I have heretofore been a subject; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same." Notice first that the man must first renounce all allegiance to all foreign rulers, and especially the one to whom he has been subject, before he takes the oath of allegiance to the United States. Apply the same principle to the sinner turning to God. He must first renounce allegiance to all other rulers, and especially to Satan his former ruler, before God will notice or receive any protestations of allegiance to Himself.

II. Some will contend that they believe in a positive work, and not in a negative one. But they are both necessary. Moreover, the negative work is necessary first, and always comes first. The command is,

"Repent, and believe the gospel,"—Mk. 1:15, not believe the gospel, and then repent, nor believe without repenting. God always follows the rational order, both in precept and in practice. The principal direction in the Old Testament is, "Thou shall not." In the New Testament it is, "Thou shalt." The former is negative, and the latter is positive. The former is preparation, and the latter is completion. The Old Testament gave principally prohibitions and warnings; but the New gave commands and exhortations. The people in the olden times were required to be segregated from the world literally before God could properly receive and train them for Himself. They were required to leave Egypt forever before God gave them His law or any special manifestation.

Some would have a man don the robe of righteousness before he doffs his tattered garments of sin. And we do not follow this course in our spiritual life any more than we do in our natural life. We usually if not always put off our old clothes before we don our new ones. Besides men usually bathe as well as lay aside their soiled garments before donning new or clean ones. Christ taught the same doctrine when He spoke a parable against putting new wine into old bottles, and patches of new cloth upon old garments, Mat. 9:14-17; Mk. 2:19-22; Luke 5:33-39. New cloth usually shrinks more or less. So do religious pretensions, when they are not well-grounded. In the electroplating process every article has to be thoroughly cleansed from all dirt and grease, or the gold or silver particles will not adhere to it. The Holy Spirit knows the true order, and always follows

it. He pushes men toward repentance before faith. He always convicts before He converts. He always justifies before He sanctifies, where the two works are separate, which is usually if not always the case. So He always requires repentance and faith before He converts. Of course there may be exceptional cases. As for instance, Christ seems to have forgiven Zaccheus before he made restitution. He said, "This day is salvation come to this house," immediately upon his confession and expression of purpose. But Christ saw what was in his heart, and acted accordingly, and blessed him on a credit. But this principle will be discussed in a later chapter. The temporal punishment sometimes pronounced by the law is often set aside too. Several instances of this are found in the Old Testament. But exceptional cases are not the rule. And it is a serious perversion of law to make exceptions the rule, and also to allow of no exceptions to the rule.

The unscriptural method of exhorting people to believe without repenting, and to practice many good works without quitting many or even any of their sins, has had the bad effect of making sinners believe or profess that they are christians, while they are still "in the gall of bitterness, and the bonds of iniquity." This also makes the impression that a great variety of sins is entirely compatible with the christian life and experience. Some mixtures break very easily. The image of clay and iron feet mentioned in Dan. 2:35-45, is a good illustration.

Then God has promised to forgive men when they repent and confess, and not before, I John 1:9; 4:15;

Ps. 32:2-5; Prov. 28:13; Jas. 5:16. Christ also says that if a man shall confess him before men, that is, that they need and accept him as a personal Savior; that He will confess them before His Father and before His holy angels; that is, that he became their Savior and redeemed them, Mat. 10:32; Rev. 3:5. If a man denies Christ before men, or in other words refuses to take Christ as his personal Savior, or to confess that he needs a Savior; Christ will also have to deny him. He will have to say to such, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity; I never knew you."

III. Another urgent reason for repentance is, that until a man repents he cannot believe the gospel. The sinner must cross the bridge of repentance before he can get on believing grounds. So Christ preached and commanded his disciples to preach, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."—Mk. 1:15. Paul stated the same formula in other words: "Repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ," Acts 20:21; but it means just the same thing, and teaches the same order and relation between the two steps into the kingdom. Saving faith cannot germinate, much less grow in a heart hardened by impenitence. The fallow ground of the human heart must be thoroughly broken up by genuine repentance before saving faith can either germinate or develop. Faith withers and dies in any heart when it becomes rebellious, stubborn or sinful. And faith returns only when such conditions are removed. Evangelical faith is indigenous to a penitent or to an obedient heart. It almost sprouts and grows of itself when the heart is in the proper condition.

So many forget that faith is not a mere emotion, or a passing opinion; but a view which a man has of God and His righteousness, and the attitude which a man assumes toward them. Faith in God involves a substantial confidence in all the will of God as expressed in both His law and in His gospel, in both His commands and in His promises. Real faith is an assent to the righteousness of the law, and a consent to assume the obligation which it demands. Unbelief is a wilful and intelligent rejection of God's law, and implies a denial of the honesty and the goodness of God, or the righteousness of His commands, and the faithfulness of His promises.

Repentance must precede faith. This is the order of reason also, and is never found reversed in either nature, experience or revelation. How can God have mercy upon a man when He knows that He intends to commit sin again? For sin is in reality a rebellion against God, and a hostility to the Most High. Does a general receive a flag of truce while the enemy is still firing? Remitting sin to a sinner while he continues to commit sin has no good moral effect upon him, but rather an evil one. On the other hand, it is very liable to cause him to condone sin, and to encourage him in it. What is the use of washing a sow, if she immediately returns to her wallowing in the mire? It is needless, too, to pull a man out of the fire or water either, if he straightway jump in again. Many a parent or teacher has remitted the punishment promised to the child only when the child penitently pledged faithful obedience in the future. The State paroles her prisoners, not when they promise to do

better, but on their good behavior, when they have shown their good intentions by their good works, not in a single promise or act, but by an unbroken line of faithful obedience for weeks and months. But God is often more lenient, and forgives a man when He sees that he is penitent, before he performs any outward works of repentance. He blesses the man on a credit when He sees that the man's credit is good. Nevertheless the man must have a full purpose to repent, and to do the works of repentance. Remitting punishment on any other condition or principle would only have a demoralizing effect. So it is the clear teaching of both reason and revelation that repentance comes before evangelical faith, and is a necessary prerequisite of saving faith.

On the other hand, no child or criminal or sinner really expects mercy while he is impenitent. In fact, it is impossible for a man to believe that God will forgive him unless he repents, or until he repents. And if he did so believe, it would be mere presumption and not true faith. Take the case of the man who has wronged another. Unless the offender makes reparation, he always feels that the other man holds a sort of grudge against him, no matter whether he shows it or not. Furthermore it frequently happens that an offender hesitates, and sometimes even refuses to make confession or reparation simply because he fears that even then the wronged one will withhold mercy or pardon. This very often prevents confession and reparation, lest the wronged one should insist on the strictest justice, and should inflict it himself. How much more then should a man fear that an offended

man or an offended God would be loth to bestow pardon or mercy upon the impenitent?

Then again, confession and reparation often beget a hope which may be nourished and developed into saving faith. Constant obedience and inner integrity are the only things which can further or furnish the grounds for the highest faith. For this reason, only those who maintain the strictest obedience ever attain to a full-orbed faith. This order is the only one which comports with the divine holiness, "which cannot look on iniquity." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."—Ps. 66:18. This is the cry of crushing conviction everywhere, that impenitence prevents real prayer on man's part, as well as pardon on God's part. Sometimes just as soon as a man begins to repent, he begins to increase in faith. But in other instances, faith seems to lag in the rear till a man has made full reparation and confession of everything. But faith rarely delays long when a man has fully repented and confessed all of his sins. Nothing begets faith in a sinner like making reparation, restitution and confession. Quoting all the promises in the Bible will not help a seeker while unrighted wrongs stare him in the face. To do so is simply daubing with untempered mortar. The quickest way through to victory is by righting wrongs. It is the only sure way. No man is right or forgiven or accepted till he has righted all wrongs, or made arrangements therefor.

IV. Furthermore any other order would lower a man's self-respect, which scorns taking what does not belong to him, or what he does not deserve. An

unearned reputation, or an undeserved one, makes a man feel ashamed, and humiliated. Quite a number of years ago, I heard a young lady remark that it made her feel like a hypocrite when any one complimented her. The reason of it was, as afterward appeared, that she was a hypocrite.

Then again, special regard for an undeserving sinner shows either a lack of a high moral standard or a deficient moral discernment. The one would reflect upon God's character, and the other upon His intelligence. Then forgiveness is receiving as righteous one who is totally unrighteous, if God forgive impenitent sinners. When a man repents, he begins immediately to prefer righteousness and to hate iniquity, and is righteous in purpose and spirit already. In such a case, a man could love and respect God for maintaining His righteous law, and at the same time trying to show mercy. But in the former case, the sinner would have no more respect for himself, but less for God, less for righteousness, and less for His law and cause. But God has maintained the majesty of His law, and will continue to do so.

Moreover forgiveness without repentance would only tend to confirm a sinner in his sins. This is very clearly shown in the case of the children of indulgent parents. D. L. Moody said that Absalom was spoiled because his father David always forgave him without requiring him to repent.

The manifestation of both love and justice makes and molds the highest form of character. Either one alone makes a weak and one-sided character, which is usually if not always defective in some point or

other. But God is not a moral dupe, neither is He an indulgent grandfather. His character is not love alone, nor holiness alone, but holy love. His object is not simply to win men to himself; but to transform them into His own character and likeness. Mercy alone never transforms anybody.

The consciousness of the love of righteousness begets a sense of satisfaction, as well as a sense of self-respect. Without repentance there would be no change of reputation or character. Without repentance there would be no change in the man himself, but only in God. Without repentance, it would seem as if God were totally ignorant of the facts, or wilfully ignored them, Ps. 25:3; Rom. 9:33; 10:11. But nothing escapes His notice. He sees the evil as well as the good, and He will by no means clear the guilty. Every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward, Heb. 2:3.

It is written, "whosoever believeth in Him shall not be ashamed."—Rom. 9:33. For this there are two reasons. One is, before a man can believe, he has to repent so thoroughly that nothing evil can be alleged against him. So his conscience is necessarily clear. And a clear conscience banishes all shame. Then our faith introduces us into the family of God. And the consciousness of divine sonship and the witness of the Spirit thereto gives their possessor a holy boldness, and a sense of humble dependent dignity. When a man really believes, he believes unto righteousness. So that if he does believe he becomes righteous in purpose and spirit, and by justification by the Lord, and so he is not ashamed.—Rom. 10:10f.

CHAPTER X.

The Principles of Restitution.

THE last chapter discusses the principles of repentance relating to present sins. This chapter deals with the repentance of one's past sins. So many seem to think that after a man has committed a sin, he has no more to do with it except to ask and receive forgiveness for it. But a man's relation to his sins never ceases till they are completely atoned for, or are freely forgiven. A man must meet his sins sooner or later. There is no possible escape therefrom. Moses' warning to his people to "Be sure your sin will find you out," Num. 32:23, expresses the inevitability of the retribution for all sin. We must meet them hereafter and here, too. We can bring them into judgment beforehand by confession and restitution. When once under the blood they are settled forever.

Repentance in general includes all the specific acts and classes of acts which manifest repentance as a state of the soul, as well as constitute repentance itself. It embraces two kinds of acts, the hatred of sin, and the consequent renunciation of sin. Both of these are grounded in the same moral principle. The first is the inward purpose, and the second is the outward act. The true basis for repentance is found, not in the fear of sin, or of its punishment, or any of its evil consequences; nor is it a cessation from sin for any worldly advantage whatever; but it is real reforma-

tion of heart and life because of a hatred of sin on account of its sinfulness in itself, and its repulsiveness to God. Repentence is simply Godly sorrow for sin, and because it made God sorry before it made us sorry.

I. True repentance leads us to adjust ourselves in several ways in regard to our sins. First, repentance leads us to adjust ourselves toward our present sins by ceasing from them altogether and forever; second, toward our possible or probable future sins, by our present purpose in making no provision for their commission at any future time; third, toward our past sins, by confession and apology, reparation or restitution. No repentance is true or thorough that does not adjust the soul toward all of these. And every person who is right at heart adjusts himself toward all of them willingly.

The first class of acts in repentance is that of those expressing the forsaking of sins. A man has not fully repented until he has forsaken every known sin. He cannot learn to do well until he ceases to do evil, Isa. 1:16f. For doing evil is not doing well, and in the very nature of things never can be. If a man still loves sin, and still practices sin, there has been no real moral change in his soul. Indeed a man may change all his outward acts, both in word and in deed, and have but little if any change of heart. A man may act much better than usual because he has a purpose and plan for deeper deviltry than ever before. This is not only possible; it is actual, and very often happens. A man may have a form of godliness, and deny both its spirit and power. This too, is not only a possibility, but is a frequent actuality.

Repentance toward present sins includes two classes of acts: namely, the outward acts, and the inward thoughts and feelings. Isaiah expresses this very clearly when he says, "Let the wicked," or the man who does wrong, "forsake his way," or his outward acts; and "let the unrighteous man," or the one who thinks evil, but whose outward life may possibly be correct, let him "forsake his thoughts."—Isa. 55:7. It is not enough to have one's outward life correct. The inmost thoughts and feelings must be right also. For a man may be wrong, and do right for policy's sake; as well as be right, and do wrong ignorantly and thoughtlessly. In the former case, he receives no credit, because his motive is wrong. In the latter case he receives no condemnation, because his heart and purpose are right, and he transgresses through ignorance and thoughtlessness. But thoughtlessness and carelessness may be so needless, and their consequences so injurious, that they might become really criminal and sinful. Notice, too, that Isaiah follows the philosophical order. For every one knows that it is easier to correct his outward life and conduct than it is his inward thoughts and feelings. To illustrate: A man recently converted was greatly provoked by his balky horses. He told a friend that if he had not become a christian, and joined the Church he would swear. This indicated that while he restrained the outward act, he still had the inward thought and desire. He did restrain the outward act; but still permitted and possibly cherished the inward feeling. For it happens very often that people who would absolutely refuse to commit an outward act of evil, will continue to

nurse evil thoughts and hard feelings. But God has promised to deliver from evil thoughts, as well as from evil words and actions. He has planned and provided for "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—II Cor. 10:5.

The Lord wants His people to be right as well as to do right. He desires that the tree shall be good, so that the fruit must be good, and cannot be evil. He declares that it is impossible for a good tree to bring forth evil fruit, or for an evil tree to bring forth good fruit, Mat. 7:17f. Yet the world persists in trying it. A man may be right in heart, and do things wrong in themselves. In such case it is the fault of the head, and not of the heart. But such a wrong will be repaired as soon as known and possible. For persons who are right in heart will correct all wrongs committed through ignorance, when they recognize the sinfulness of such acts. All wrong acts committed through ignorance are faults and mistakes, and not sins. The sin is in the intelligent attitude or purpose of the will, and not in the mere act itself. The intelligent purpose is the act of the soul, and the outward commission of the purpose is the act of the body. Nevertheless every variation from a perfect law is either a transgression, sin of omission or a sin of ignorance. As the sin is in the intelligent purpose, a change of purpose may change the same act from sin to righteousness, or from righteousness to sin. So also, a change of purpose will eliminate sinfulness from acts otherwise sinful. For instance, one may give

another five dollars. It may be given as a present, for food, for missions, or for other benevolence; or it may be given as a bribe, or hush money, or it may be stolen money. In the first instance, it may be a man's duty to receive it; in the other, it may be absolutely forbidden by law both divine and civil. God commands us to "keep our heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4:23.

II. It is not enough to cease from wrong doing. For the same spirit and principle that would lead a man to forsake present wrong because of its sinfulness, would also lead him to rectify past wrongs if possible. Every one who has begun the christian life, and many who have never begun it, wish they had the opportunity of living their lives over again, so that they might make them different or better. Penitence over past evil conduct leads the penitent to do two things: First, to undo past wrongs to others; second, to warn others of the mistakes which he made. In the first instance he makes restitution, and in the second he makes confession. We can never live our lives over again, but we can change some things in them. Everyone who has truly repented, wishes that he could modify some things in his past life. He would be better satisfied if he could and did. More and more are we convinced that true repentance requires one to undo all past wrongs if possible. The truth is, the man who is truly penitent wants to do it. The same spirit that causes a man to want to live his life over again to make it different or better, causes him to want to warn others against the mistakes which he made, and the sins which he committed. So here we

have the basis for Scriptural confession. The impossibility of making proper confession and reparation sometimes induces remorse and despair. There is no doubt but that it was the impossibility of altering the results of the betrayal of Christ that caused Judas to commit suicide.

The Lord requires every one to stand faultless before His throne, I Cor. 1:8; Eph. 5:27; I Thes. 5:23; Jude 24. One is naturaly ashamed to defend a man who is unworthy or guilty of wrong. Even a criminal lawyer would prefer to defend a man who has a worthy cause. Some lawyers will closely examine every case before they will undertake it. Abraham Lincoln refused numbers of cases because he considered them unjust. But Christ, our Advocate, will undertake the case of every sinner, no matter how bad he has been or done in the past, if his present purpose is right. No retainer's fee is required, except to trust in His atonement made by His precious blood. He requires only one condition, and that is, entirely to eschew all sin in the present and in the future, and also to rectify past wrongs as far as possible, and as soon as possible.

Suppose some man should be saved because he believed, or because he professed to believe in Christ, and suppose this man had not fully repented, or had not repented at all, who had not forsaken present sins, nor righted past ones as far as possible. Then suppose another man who had not done worse and probably better, but had not believed or made any profession. Should the latter be rejected on account of his unbelief only, he might and probably would

say, "That man is no better than I am." He would consider it unjust on the part of God to save such a man in his sins simply because he believed or professed to believe; while condemning another whose moral conduct and purpose is just as good, or possibly better, but who makes no profession of faith. No kind or degree of profession of faith, or even faith itself wins the confidence of anybody. But a high moral purpose and a pure life always impress people, and win the confidence of both saint and sinner.

If one man has cheated another, or stolen from him, or owes him and will not pay him, the creditor, or the man who was cheated or robbed, will have no confidence in the debtor or the thief. For he will naturally and rightly expect the debtor to pay him, or the thief, or cheat, to make restitution, when they profess to love God. If the thief, cheat or debtor does not make restitution, dishonesty is considered more of a reflection on a man after such a profession than it was before; because one naturally expects a change of character with a change of profession. Should God receive a man who was recognized as a sinner without any change in his conduct, the world would consider Him a dupe, or destitute of moral distinctions. Therefore God wants every man to straighten up his past and present life when such a man takes upon himself the name of Christ. Therefore Paul wrote, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."—II Tim. 2:19. We dislike to hear of a man bearing our family name accused of crime or sin. We almost consider it a reflection upon ourselves. It seems worse still when the accused is one of our

own immediate family. God wants the divine family and its name to be above reproach. Still some presume upon the mercy of God, and the credulity of man. A man once said that God forgave all his past sins, and therefore he did not need to make restitution, or reparation, for Christ paid all his debts for him. We are ashamed of our own relatives when they live in sin and crime. And the nearer they are to us by the ties of nature, the more of a grief and shame they are to us. But we respect and trust them when they repent and become converted, no matter what their previous life has been.

David recognized this principle of confidence, and assigns it as a reason for his confession. He wanted men to have confidence in him and in God, too. He would, then, confess that people might have confidence in him and also in God. Therefore he says in his confession to God, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou might be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."—Ps. 51:4; Rom. 3:4. The Lord will not follow such a course that His creatures will have room to criticize his holiness and justice. Three worlds will be assembled on the judgment day to witness the trial of all earth's gathered nations, and hear the decision. The trial must be so conducted and decided that all men, angels and devils can say, "Amen," to both trial and decision. The whole plan of salvation was arranged as it was in order that "God might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." The Lord wants us to clean up our record so thoroughly, and then live so uprightly, that all the

world can fairly and honestly acquiesce in our acquittal on the judgment day.

Suppose a man has been dishonest in the past. Who can or will condemn him if he pays up every cent that he owes? Suppose a man has insulted another and has done it intentionally and maliciously, too. What fair-minded man will condemn him if he confesses it and apologizes for it? If a man has lied about another, and confesses to the man wronged, and corrects it with the one to whom he told the lie, what more could he do, and who would expect any more? Has the man been spiteful or mean; if he confesses it and makes reparation for it, what more can he or ought he to do? But if a man should knowingly or maliciously wrong another, and God should forgive him without requiring him to rectify his wrong if it is possible, as soon as possible and as far as possible, multitudes of both saints and sinners would rise up against both him and God on the judgment day. Even as it is, some people who do not understand the case, criticise God's moral government of the world. Of course, when men understand all the data, and the reasons of God's plan of procedure, their objections are silenced. If real cause of criticism existed, there would be more criticism as time passed, and there would be no way of silencing it, for it would be cumulative.

Restitution is restoring or paying for, or otherwise making good, that which was stolen, robbed or cheated, or otherwise unlawfully obtained. Reparation is making confession, apology and atonement for injury done to one's feelings, dignity, person, rights,

reputation, standing, position or character. A wrong done to one's property is more evident than wrongs of any other kind. This is because possessions are material, and can be seen or handled, and their removal from their owner can be made clear and is easily understood by an ordinary observer. Whereas in cases of reparation, there enters in several other factors which modify its character. For this reason the principle of righting wrongs is more clearly seen in restitution than in reparation.

A man who wants to do right, wants to right his wrongs. Yes, and that is one of the first things that he wants to do when he repents. Reparation is spontaneous and irrepressible in the soul that loves God and man. He does not need either command or persuasion. The man that loves God loves his fellowman, and with or without a command, and with or without a suggestion, he wants to right his wrongs. Both love and justice impel him to do it. So far as is recorded, Christ had not said a word to Zaccheus about restitution. But when divine love began to move in his soul, and a sense of justice awakened, he did that of his own accord.—Luke 19 : 8. Reparation and restitution naturally follows in the wake of real repentance.

Under the old Mosaic law, cattle, crops, goods or money, etc., were required to be restored one, two, four or fivefold the amount stolen, according to circumstances.—Ex. 22 : 1-14. When Nathan propounded the parable of the ewe lamb to David, David immediately and voluntarily cried out, "He shall restore the lamb fourfold." He declared further that a man who would do such a thing ought to die, thus making the

penalty very much stronger than had either God or Moses.—II Sam. 12:5f. Zaccheus also vowed that if he "had taken anything from any man by false accusation, I will restore him fourfold."—Luke 19:8.

If it were left for man to make laws and to prescribe penalties for their violation, most of the laws would be much more rigid, and the penalties more severe than they are in the Mosaic code. R. G. Ingersoll said that the Mosaic law was the most cruel code on earth, and that it had hundreds of offenses punishable by death. The fact is, there were only seventeen punishable by death, all of which have been punished by death in this and in other lands. In England three hundred years ago, there were two hundred and eighty-three offenses punishable by death. In most States of the Union the law requires criminals guilty of grand larceny to be sent to the penitentiary, no matter whether the theft is restored or not. But the Mosaic law released a thief upon the restoration of his theft, and the payment of the cost of his arrest and conviction. The laws in the United States prior to the revolution punished the present felonious offenses with death. There were from eighty to one hundred offenses punishable by death in most of the States, and in one State there were one hundred and fifteen. Moreover some of these offenses were perfectly puerile. Among them were such as catching fish on another man's farm, or killing a rabbit in your neighbor's woods; as if a fish or a rabbit were worth far more than a man's life. But the Mosaic law was always reasonable and sensible. It did not aim simply at the punishment of sin and crime, but at the rectification of all

wrongs. The simple punishment of sin and crime is not so likely to correct an evil as is the reparation of wrong. The mere punishment of sin may not help either the sinner or the one injured by his sins, but the reparation of wrong will always help both. The plan of procedure prescribed by the Old Mosaic law will right up wrongs between man and man, and between man and the State. It will inculcate a better spirit in both. Indeed it prescribes the only wise settlement of all difficulties. If the State sends a man to state's prison, and the man serves his time out; when he is released, the wrong against his fellowman is still unrighted. The State is satisfied, but the individual is not. And really the man is the principal factor to reckon with. And when the individual settled with his victim in the Mosaic law, the law was satisfied too. They are just as applicable today as they were three thousand years ago. The most successful evangelists are preaching the doctrine of reparation and restitution as taught by Moses, and it is yielding very salutary results.

Chas. G. Finney was holding a revival in New York City. Among other seekers came a young lady who acknowledged herself to be a thief and shoplifter. She became very deeply convicted on account of her sins, and came to him for counsel. She confessed her numerous thefts to him, and asked his advice. He advised her to restore all the goods which she had stolen. She did so in part. In one case she laid the stolen article on the doorstep, rang the door bell, and ran away, as she was very much afraid of the people at that house. He advised her to return

and confess it, lest the theft might be attributed to some one else, who possibly might be injured by her silence; especially if the people happened to see some one walking away when they found the restored article. She did not remember where she stole some of her articles. He advised her in such case to keep them and use them as her own till she should learn who the owner was. Then she should restore the stolen articles or pay for them.

There are quite a variety of wrongs to possessions to right. There are wrongs to property, or possessions or purse. Some violate the property rights in one way, and some in another. Most people oppose plain stealing, rank robbery, or bold burglary. But some not only condone the more respectable and legal forms of dishonesty, but approve and defend them as shrewd business. Advantage in a horse trade; farmers doping a diseased and heavy horse of patriarchal age and usefulness, and selling him for a safe, sound and splendid worker just nine years old this very Spring; pressing men who are in straitened circumstances, taking mortgages on men's farms or homes, making verbal promises contrary to the plain statements of the written instrument, neglecting to call attention to the contents and significance of the written instrument, and even misrepresenting them to the illiterate, and then enforcing the written letter, and ignoring the verbal promise, or even denying it; land agents combining together to dupe the ignorant and unsophisticated; farmers representing their farms as free from all encumbrances of liens, mortgages, deeds of trust, back taxes, infant heirs, quit claims, or any-

thing else, making thoughtless and ignorant buyers pay twice over for what they get, and which was represented to them as first class bargains; renters, not only using property, but burning fences, destroying trees, injuring buildings, and then neglecting and even refusing to pay for either rent or damages; taking advantage of men's lack of judgment or sense; making boys, girls and women do the work of men, and do it at a disadvantage, too, and yet refuse to pay them men's wages; compelling employes to take goods on wages at an advanced price; physicians and nurses recommending each other for special treatment, and then dividing the spoils; physicians and surgeons insisting that nothing less or different from a severe and costly surgical operation will save a man's life, limb, or health, that they may more effectually extort hard-earned money from the ignorant and helpless dupes; or physicians doctoring the symptoms instead of the disease, giving mere stimulants and not medicine, to make the patients believe they are being helped when they are not; advising all prescriptions to be filled at the drugstore that gives them a rake-off on all customers sent there; merchants joining in a pool to raise the price of goods, and lower the price of produce; lawyers advising immediate action and drastic measures to be taken by foolish clients, making them believe they have a sure and safe case in law, when they know they have not, just to extort a fee; selling out to opponents for a bribe or a bonus—a case and cause for which they have already extorted enormous fees to defend and save; requiring a retainer's fee, and then advising a settlement, because it is found that

the case is not safe; preachers pretending to have a call to fairer fields and higher salaries, to secure another call with a better salary at home; evangelists magnifying the actual results of their meetings, counting as converts all who ever expressed an interest or a desire or a hope of living a better life, magnifying as marvelous and miraculous all that was done, if it were done; poultry raisers selling ordinary eggs for pure fresh eggs of special breeds, or puncturing, boiling or shaking the genuine eggs of good breeds so as to prevent hatching, and yet selling them for pure fresh eggs of good breeds, thus doing their patrons a double wrong; selling as good and fresh, eggs that have already been set on and spoiled for any purpose whatever; farmers' wives putting stones or salt in rolls of butter to give it bulk or weight, or putting it up without any care for cleanliness or palatability; dairymen putting plenty of water and chalk in all their milk, and then selling it for pure and fresh and sweet;—all of these are instances of intentional dishonesty in taking advantage of others in business dealings. These few instances might be multiplied.

Some of these may be permitted and even sanctioned by legal forms, but statutory legislation will never make dishonesty and cheating right in the sight of God and honest men. Debts expiring by reason of legalized limitation of time are still due. Debts are never outlawed in the kingdom of God. Thieves never caught, known or even suspected are not relieved of the duty of restitution by the ignorance of their victims, or their own supposed innocence. Respectable roguery seems to be condemned more bit-

terly than is the bold, out-breaking, and dare-devil kind. But neither sweetness nor smoothness sanctifies the sinfulness of sin, nor the diabolism of dishonesty. Money or property of any kind or quantity must be restored to their rightful owner before the guilty one can find real pardon and peace. God's plan of righting all wrongs is the surest, shortest and quickest way to the mercy seat. All other methods are only attempts to climb up some other way.

CHAPTER XI.

Principles of Reparation.

THE duty of reparation is not so clear to most people as is the duty of restitution. A wrong to property, possessions or purse, is more easily seen and understood than is a wrong to one's person, dignity, feelings, standing, reputation, character or rights. There are so many ameliorating and modifying circumstances connected with this class of wrongs that ordinary observers are scarcely aware of any wrong done. In some instances, a case which at first thought seems wrong may upon full investigation seem not only permissible, but necessary, not only not reprehensible but entirely justifiable. "Circumstances do alter cases."

Then again, thoughtlessness and ignorance render one liable to injure another unconsciously and unintentionally. For there is such a difference in people's tastes, between their likes and dislikes, between their preferences and prejudices, that what one prefers, another cannot endure. Cases have frequently occurred where a kindly disposed person has tried to oblige another, but seriously wounded him, and sadly offended him. Many actual wrongs, so far as mere consequences are concerned, were wholly unintentional. Many an intentional favor has been received as a serious wrong. The recent cartoons concerning "Happy Hooligan," very aptly illustrate this point.

"Happy" was always getting into trouble because all of his attempted kindnesses were either misunderstood, or were not just what their recipient wanted, or more emphatically exactly what they did not want. Most officious acts are ill-timed attempted kindnesses. They are blundering, thoughtless kindnesses. Genuine kindness is a gracious judicious doing of just what people both need and want, and is usually gratefully received. But most performers of officious deeds are consummate bores. Such need instruction and not rebuke. They have good intentions, but very poor judgment.

There are three factors which make an act right or wrong: purpose, manner and consequences. All of these factors may be right, or one or more may be wrong. We can always control the purpose, and usually the manner; but quite often we are entirely unable to control or manage the consequences. The consequences may not be at all what was intended, no matter whether the act be right or wrong. For instance the Republicans wanted Theodore Roosevelt out of the way in politics. They saw that he and his political prestige must be reckoned with. So they thought they would kindly bury him in the vice-presidency. But that was the very means of elevating him to the presidency upon the death of McKinley, which was the very thing that they did not want. Since that time they have tried to bury C. E. Hughes, an Ex-Governor of New York, in the ermine robe, and seem so far to have succeeded. Sometimes men succeed in their plans both good and bad, and in others they do not. The failure is sometimes due to lack of

good judgment; but in others to the modification of unforeseen providences, as in the case of Roosevelt. The same was true in the case of Joseph. His brethren were very anxious to get rid of him. Their efforts led to his final exaltation and promotion, where he was more in their way than ever. Some have thought that Judas expected that Christ would adroitly escape the Jews, even if he did betray the Saviour into wicked hands, and that he could make gain at nobody's expense, and nobody would be any the wiser. Christ had delivered Himself from His enemies at Nazareth and at other places. Could He not, and would He not do so again? But He did not, and Judas was disappointed, say the advocates of this theory. Judas could not change the results of the betrayal, though he made an effort so to do. And that is the point we want to make just here.

But in spite of ameliorating, modifying and confusing circumstances, reparation is commanded just as clearly and positively as is restitution. In the sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."—Mat. 5:23f. That is, if you have wronged your brother, you must go and make reparation before you offer your gift. A man's gift may be his prayer, praise, service or himself. But no matter what it is, the implication of the text is, that God will not receive a man's gifts, until he rights his wrong. All offerings, no matter what they were, were required to be with-

out blemish. The same principles apply to the New Testament dispensation. The New Testament requires a perfect love, perfect faith, perfect consecration and a perfect service. No offering having a blemish was accepted under either dispensation. So our prayer must be earnest, honest and with faith. Praise must be sincere, and consecration must be complete.

Sometimes God blesses people on a credit, when he sees that their credit is good, and their purpose is pure, honest and steadfast. A deed is already performed in heart and purpose when men are determined to do it. When a man resolves to be noble, he is noble. When he resolves to be honest, he is honest. So far as character is concerned, a man is just exactly what he is determining to be. God sees men's purpose, and judges them accordingly. "God looketh on the heart," and chooses men according to what He sees there. When God sees that men's determination to repent or to consecrate themselves is so strong, settled and fixed that it is practically certain, and likely to be thorough and abiding, He forgives and receives. If God did not in some instances bless people on credit, they would probably be lost. Suppose that some one has stolen, cheated or robbed another of a large sum of money. If he repents a short time before he dies, he has neither time nor strength to earn sufficient money to pay all his debts or thefts. Were his salvation to depend upon his making full restitution immediately or at all, there would be no hope for him. But when a man gets to that point in his penitence where he is determined to

pay up what he can, all he can, and as soon as he can, his heart is right, and God will forgive him, and men should do so, too.

Under this head come the wrongs which persons do to their fellowmen in trying to misrepresent them, or to injure them intentionally or maliciously. There is not necessarily any hatred connected with wrongs to the property or possessions of other people. A man can steal, cheat and overreach, and yet not have any malice in his heart toward his victims. Neither are they always, or even usually caused by any malignant emotion. Most wrongs to the possessions of others are caused by purely selfish feelings. It is not to injure that other fellow, but to help one's self, that causes such sins. But of course genuine love, either christian or natural, would prevent one man from wronging another as to his possessions. Love has a negative as well as a positive element in it. Real love refrains from doing evil as well as never neglects to do good to others.

Occasionally, though very rarely, there are some ameliorating, modifying circumstances, which would almost seem to justify stealing. To illustrate; a man or his family might be starving, and it might be impossible to get anything to eat by fair and honest means, for money or trade, for labor or on credit. During floods and fires when men are in straitened circumstances they think nothing of helping themselves to other people's property. Men, who under ordinary circumstances, would not think of stealing, just take what they feel they must have, and nobody thinks of indicting them, or of accusing them of dis-

honesty. This is the same principle on which Chirst justified David and the men who were with him in entering the temple, and eating the shewbread, which it was not lawful for them to eat, but only for the priests.—I Sam. 21:1-6; Mat. 12:3f. Moreover the Mosaic law gave a hungry man the privilege of going into another man's vineyard or orchard, cornfield or wheat field, and satsisfying his hunger. But it did not permit him to carry away any fruit or grain, or to do any injury to the trees or growing grain. Christ and His apostles went through the grainfields and helped themselves. The Pharisees criticised them for doing so on the Sabbath day, but made no objection to them helping themselves to another man's grain when hungry.—Mat. 12:1f. God owns the earth, with all that it is and holds and grows, and claims the right to let his creatures which are starving relieve their present hunger. He has a claim over the ordinary civil owners, and exercises it.

But in the case of wrongs to feelings, or sense of honor, reputation or character, there is usually more or less malice. Of course it is possible to injure a person in this way unintentionally. It is not a rare thing either to injure some one by a thoughtless word or a careless deed. Indeed some of the worst wounds to feelings or to a sense of honor have been caused by thoughtlessness and carelessness. Such wrongs are classed as sins of ignorance, and need explanation rather than rectification; but rectification is needed if positive injury is done. But the Old Testament required all sins of ignorance to be repented of, and atoned for, when known. Hurts due to misunderstanding need

only explanation. This includes those acts where neither good nor evil were intended, and also those where only good was intended, but the intention was misunderstood, or the act was providentially hindered from accomplishing what was intended. Sometimes kind friends have brought in food to their sick neighbors, and it has made them sicker still. But it was intended as a kindness. This might be called a sin of ignorance, too.

A wrong to one's reputation or character is generally a far greater wrong than taking his money or property. Both sacred and profane, as well as both poetical and prose writers, agree on this. Shakespeare says, "Whoso steals my purse steals trash. But whoso filches from me my good name, robs me of that which enriches not him, and makes me poor indeed." Civil law, in making the penalty for libel and slander so strong, has recognized the heinousness of them both. Thousands of dollars have been asked as damages for libel and slander, and have been granted, too. The loss of money or property may be retrieved sooner or later; and the loss of it may work but little or no injury, even if it is not recovered. But a very little whisper of slander may work an injury which may be lasting, painful and irretrievable. Position, standing, influence and respect may be lost and never recovered. The loss of a good name is generally much more bitter and lasting than the loss of money or property. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor than silver and gold."—Prov. 22:1; "A good name is better than precious ointment."—Eccl. 7:1. The fact is, in many instances, a good name is

worth money itself. Blackmailing is another serious wrong. It is offering one an alternative of two wrongs; and giving people the choice of losing money or reputation.

One of the meanest and most contemptible things conceivable is for one man falsely to accuse another to save his own reputation, and a reputation which does not justly belong to him. This is very much like the pickpockets in large cities crying out, "Look out for pickpockets," or "Stop thief," to divert attention from themselves. It adds hypocrisy to dishonesty, and would injure others to save themselves. This spirit is very well exemplified in partisan politics. One politician very often abuses another to divert attention from himself. Judas Iscariot illustrates another phase of the wrong, and its reparation. He had not betrayed Christ on account of personal malice, but only for money. He had the safety of Christ in his own hands, especially previous to the betrayal. But for money he exposed Christ to both trial and death. He repented, confessed his sin, and restored the money, which was nothing more nor less than a real bribe. Here there was no real love. But even a sense of justice would not permit Judas to keep the money, though its retention would not injure Christ in the least, nor its restoration help him. Its restoration however would simply be the seal of his sincerity stamped upon his confession, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood."—Mat. 27:4.

Under this head come also that class of wrongs called injustice before the civil law. This injustice may be caused by the influence of preference, preju-

dice, bribe, fear or policy. It may be done by the false testimony of a witness, or by an unfair decision of a juror or judge, or by the legal manipulation of unscrupulous lawyers. It may be due to either plaintiff or defendant unduly influencing any or all of the aforesaid parties by gifts or bribes on the one hand, or by threats and intimidation on the other. But no matter by whom or by what means or in what manner or for what purpose, they have been committed, wrongs against the civil rights of the people must be repaired. Neither secrecy, nor mutual oaths or vows, nor desire for personal safety, neither preference, prejudice, nor desire for popularity, position, power or pleasure, can furnish a sufficient excuse for the commission of acts of injustice either in courts, or simply in society. Those guilty of crimes against justice can never find pardon or peace unless and until they repent, and make full reparation and confession. Most of the miscarriages of justice are caused by a failure to secure the rights of the poor or weak, are represented in the Scriptures by the fatherless and the widow. The rich, powerful or prominent rarely get their full quota of punishment, and usually beyond their rights in cases of litigation. Most cases, both civil and criminal, are manipulated in their favor. It is my judgment that cases of this kind are more rarely repaired than are any other kinds of wrong. So many seem to feel that all is fair in law, as well as in love and war, if only it favors them. Nevertheless there are found a few men who have had the integrity to pay debts which had been outlawed, when they have turned to God. But fewer still who have the con-

science and the integrity to repair wrongs against others, when the civil courts have decided in their favor.

A wrong against another injures the wrong-doer as well as his victim. Such wrongs will sooner or later humiliate the wrong-doer even more than they do the one wronged. God often puts in subjection those who misuse their influence, liberty or authority over others. Those who violate the civil law are put into subjection to the civil law. Those who obey the law are made free from its inflictions by their obedience. Those who violate the natural law must suffer the consequences, too. Eve misused her influence over Adam, and so was put into subjection to him, not because she was a woman, but because of her transgression, and her influence for evil.

As humiliation is a part of real repentance; it is also a part of all just punishment. Confession and reparation are not only a recognition of our sinfulness and unworthiness, and their just deserts; but also a willingness to receive our just deserts. Paul said to the Jewish Sanhedrin, "If I have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die."—Acts 25:11. Genuine conviction carries with it a feeling of obligation that a transgressor ought to suffer for his transgression both according to its kind and quantity, and penitent sinners and criminals so punish themselves. Men have mourned because they have caused others to mourn. Some have denied themselves of comforts because they have unjustly deprived others of them. Many forms of voluntary penance are suggested by the wrongs done by transgressors to their fellowman.

A wrong to one's feelings or sense of honor, dignity or self-respect, is more easily seen and felt than described. Sometimes it is not the deprivation of property, nor detraction from the reputation, nor the injury to, nor the ruin of, character, but an unkindness shown, or an insult offered. In the case of robbery, stealing, cheating or over-reaching and oppression, there is not necessarily any ill-will. Of course there is a lack of any positive love; for positive love, either christian or natural, would preclude them. Sometimes thieves, cheats, robbers, and burglars show a sort of kindness and courtesy to those whom they rob or cheat. Indeed some robbers have been known to be very kind and polite to their victims. But social sweetness is not the soul of honor; neither is studied smoothness the essence of moral righteousness. So neither will any amount of urbanity or kindness sanctify any of the serious sins of life. Some will pat you caressingly on the back while stabbing you in the back. But no amount of petting or patting will excuse a sin or crime, nor atone for it.

But in the case of wilful lying, intentional misrepresentation, insults or unkindness, there is usually an inexcusable malice at the bottom of it. When there is any genuine wrong done to one, the injured one may feel, show or act resentment. And there may be some reason for it. But in the former case, the incensed one wants to go beyond the bounds of justice. In the case of real wrong against one, he never needs to lie or misrepresent, in trying to secure his rights, or just dues. The statement of the plain bare facts is enough for that. Occasionally one

feels that he must exaggerate a little because the other party to the dispute does the same. But usually quarrels are not settled by unfair statements. Troubles are rarely ever settled till both parties are willing to do the fair thing. And no one with any sense of justice wants to misrepresent, or has any desire for more than his dues. It is the desire for more than justice that prompts lying and misrepresentation. So many are like the man who consulted a lawyer to secure his assistance to extricate him from trouble. The lawyer told him that he would endeavor to see that he got justice. The man replied, "It is not justice that I want, but mercy." The great majority of litigants in law want not their dues, but more than their dues. The just man is an honest man, and the honest man is always fair. Justice, fairness and honesty always go together. But no matter what has prompted prevarication or misrepresentation, all statements aside from or beyond the truth, require rectification. When a man's soul is in such a condition that he "desires truth in the inward parts," he desires all his statements in regard to the past, present and future to be true.

To right an intentional wrong is a far harder task than to rectify a mere mistake. The confession of having had a mean malicious spirit is much harder than to admit of making many blunders. For this reason, too, many guilty of serious sins will frankly acknowledge that they have made many mistakes, but will stoutly refuse to admit the commission of a single sin. Very few people will candidly acknowledge that they have tried to misrepresent another, or to

insult him. Fewer still will admit that they have tried to insult another if they have done it in polite or sneaking manner. Usually if one has tried to insult another politely, he will politely deny it. I verily believe that many will be lost simply because they would rather take their chances in eternity than to confess or right such wrongs. Furthermore the people who will insult another in a polite or sneaking manner, or wrong another in a sly way, or who have been guilty of little wrongs or injustices, which they think will never be discovered, will usually become indignant, and denounce as mean and suspicious any injured person who should ever in the least hint at their wrongs, or who do not believe that they walk in all the commandments and ordinances blameless. When such people have nothing to say in their own defense they defend themselves by abusing those who accuse or suspect them. Such a disposition and conduct are radically wrong, and must be corrected before such a sinner can ever find pardon and peace. The lack of such reparation and repentance has kept many a soul in darkness and despair. Malice and anger, jealousy and envy, blind the soul so that it cannot discern delicate truths or balance weighty ones. Nevertheless people can usually see enough truth under all circumstances to know the right, and to save the soul.

CHAPTER XII.

The Principles of Confession.

THERE is a general obligation for men to confess their sins. It is enforced in both the Old and New Testaments, but especially in the latter. It would be best for human nature if confession were made even if the Bible did not require it. It is a condition and preparation for forgiveness on the part of God. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—I John 1:9. It is commanded as a preparation for prayer. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another."—Jas. 5:16. It accompanies righteousness and salvation. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."—Rom. 10:10. Confession is a means of temporal as well as spiritual success, and the lack of it prevents prosperity. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."—Prov. 28:13. Confession of one's own sins and the sins of others brings not only answer to prayer, but also success in christian work, and visions of the present and the future.—Dan. 9:12.

These commands seem to be general injunctions applicable to all people and to all cases, either serious or light, and no matter whether any one is injured or

offended or not. For let it be understood that the obligation to confess does not depend upon the injured one's knowledge of your wrongs. A man whom one has wronged may be lying unconscious and at the point of death, or may have moved beyond your knowledge or the reach of your vile slanders. Yet you may owe it to his standing and the satisfaction of his friends, to correct the impressions of your misrepresentations. The person slandered may have died long since, but you owe it to his relatives and friends to relieve them of the odium of unfounded slanders. Men on their dying bed have had to confess to murders for which others had already been hung. A man's family and friends have rights as well as himself.

There are several instances of confession in the Bible. Judas Iscariot had not wronged Christ as to his possessions; neither had he misrepresented Christ, nor insulted Him, so far as we know. Nevertheless his attitude toward Him, and his betrayal of Christ, was such that he wronged Christ, and injured His feelings, standing and safety. He seemed to fail to realize the full force of the results of the betrayal till "he saw that Christ was condemned."—Matt. 27:3. In his case as in so many others, he never realized the full force of the wrong till it was committed. It was the sense of the sad results of the betrayal which wrought conviction in Judas, and wrung confession from him. The other case was that of the prodigal son. He had not stolen from his father, nor defrauded him. He had not misrepresented him, nor intentionally insulted him. But his demand for his

portion of the goods, and his departure from home, while apparently innnocent in themselves, really expressed dissatisfaction and selfishness. In that way it was a practical insult to his kind old father. He did not manifest the proper spirit for a son. So when he came under conviction he said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Then comes what expresses the true spirit of all repentance. He requested his father to "make me as one of thy hired servants."—Luke 15:17-21. A person truly penitent is willing to take just what he deserves in the way of punishment for his sins, although he may not want to take more than he deserves. When a man objects to the strict requirements of God's law, to the punishments for their violations, to the pungency of his suffering therefor, and to God's providential punishments and dealings, he is not quite penitent. Complete penitence requires full resignation to all the will of God in punishment as well as in suffering.

I. Sins of all kinds and degrees have to be confessed sooner or later to God or to man as the circumstances may be. God requires nothing useless. Every thing is for a purpose, and for a good purpose, too. So it is here. There are many reasons why God should require confessions from the culprits in His kingdom. Time and space forbid the mention and discussion of all. But a proper understanding of the question can be had only by considering a few of them. The fundamental principles of confession should be thoroughly understood.

1. In the first place, confession vindicates the char-

acter of God. Sin is a wilful violation of divine law. Confession is not only an admission of the transgression of God's law, but it implies also a recognition of the righteousness of His law. Confession of sin as sin is a tacit recognition of the righteousness of God, for no man confesses his sin as long as he refuses to acknowledge the justice of God, or the righteousness of His law. So confession of sin becomes, in a way, a testimony to the character of God. And men's confession of sin as sin justifies God, and acquits Him of all blame.—Job 40:8-14; Ps. 51:4; Rom. 3:4. As long as men try to justify themselves they try also to find fault with the divine administration, and especially with the law of God, as found in His word. But when they become penitent, and begin to confess their sins, they then begin to honor God and His word. When the dying thief began to confess his sins he began to defend Christ. At first both thieves railed on Christ. But finally one repented, and rebuked the other, and said, that they were justly condemned, "for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss."—Luke 23:40f. When the people were trying to justify themselves, they said, "Release unto us Barabbas, but crucify the Christ." But when they repent, they honor and exalt Christ. Impenitent sinners nearly always blame some one else for their sins, and sometimes the very one who is endeavoring to help them. When they begin to confess their sins they cease to blame other people. So as a rule impenitent sinners are not in a condition of mind to do justice to God or good people either till he repents.

2. Related to this is another fact frequently overlooked. Confessing sin glorifies God. As sin is a rebellion against God, and a disrespect for God; so confession of sin reinstates God as a rightful ruler over men's hearts, and implies a belief in His right to universal rulership. All enemies shall be put under His feet when "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father."—Phil. 2:9-11; Josh. 7:19-21. Furthermore, confession of sin not only acknowledges the right and authority of God's dominion, but admitting the blameworthiness of sin implies also a recognition of God's knowledge, ability and willingness to save from sin; otherwise there is no hope of overcoming temptation, if God cannot save from sin. The laws of moral principles are very much like a teeter-board. When one end goes up the other must go down. When a man exalts God, sin must go down. If sin is exalted and condoned, so much is God and His word disparaged. "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."—Ps. 12:8. "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil."—Ps. 97:10.

3. Confession of Christ is really an admission that He is our last and only hope of salvation from sin. Usually the unregenerate try everything else before they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. Confessing Christ as the only Savior from sin is one way of confessing not only the sinfulness and heinousness of sin, but also its tremendous dominating power over unregenerate men, which nothing but the power of an omnipotent Savior can break. Only the Lion of the tribe of Judah can break every chain. No other one

can. So we see that confession of sin honors the triune God. It honors the Father as the Creator and sovereign Ruler of the moral universe; Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Savior and Redeemer; and the Holy Spirit as our support and sanctifier.

4. Again confession of sin frees the Church and cause of Christ from reproach. Sin against God reflects upon Christ as an all-sufficient Savior. It also injures the Church which is His body. It discourages His members in their own christian lives, cripples their faith in helping others, and hurts their dignity, feelings and sense of honor. Men usually decline to join a Church while it is under a just reproach, for fear its doctrines or practice is bad, or has an evil influence. But confession is a sort of an admission that the Church, its doctrines, practices, members and Savior are right, but that the man himself has been wrong. When under reproach from open sin in its members, there are two ways in which the Church can be relieved from reproach. One is for the member to withdraw; and the other is for the Church to reprove and disown the crooked member. The easiest and wisest way possible is for the member to confess his sins, where he will do so, and reform his life.

5. Just as soon as a man submits himself to God, God makes him either a soldier or a sentinel for righteousness. It is the divine purpose to marshal all the moral forces that make for righteousness, and if possible use them as an army of conquest. The first thing which God requires of a man when he turns to God is to warn others of the sins which he committed, and of the pitfalls into which he fell. He knows the

temptations and the snares, and the dreadful results of falling therein. No one understands them so well as he. Others can speak from faith and observation; but he from actual knowledge and experience. A knowledge of this fact appeals to other men, who realize that he knows their temptations, and understands how to warn and advise others, and also sympathizes with them in their struggles, difficulties and defeats.—Lev. 5 : 5. Redeemed drunkards have always been able to win more drunkards to righteousness than has any one else. Each man can win his own former class of companions in sin, because they feel that he knows and understands their faults and foibles, weakness and wickedness. They feel also that a former companion in sin cannot reproach them so much as might one who had never been guilty of like sins.

6. Confession of sin secures and maintains one's own personal influence for good. Confession is a repudiation of one's past sinful course. Refusing to confess is virtually saying, "I do not care if I did sin. I would do it again under the same circumstances." But when a man confesses his sins, he acknowledges his own defection from duty, throws himself on the mercy of both friends and foes, and looks for leniency and love from both God and man. When he confesses, men regard him as earnest and sincere. When a man confesses, he is not only to acknowledge that he committed a certain act, but he is to confess that in performing such an act, he committed a sin. Mere confession of sin in general does not make much of an impression. For many old sinners and hypocrites will do that, while stoutly denying their specific sins. The

divine law said, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."—I John 1:9. This means not sin general, but sins in particular. We repent of sins in particular, not so much sin in general.

7. Confession relieves the confessor of the charge of hypocrisy. No man can play a double rôle and be honest. The man who professes righteousness without confessing his former unrighteousness is usually suspected of holding secretly to his former evil life. Confession is a formal and public renunciation of one's former sinful life. This public acknowledgment of one's past evil life puts the confessor at swords' points with his former sinful associations. Confession is a practical burning of bridges which connects a penitent with his former evil life. His former associates will know if he still practices his former evil habits, and will report it. Such confession also makes a man more or less ashamed to return to his former evil practices. It also usually makes a man more determined against his sins, and to practice righteousness. For this reason it is always a good thing to get a young convert to acknowledge, renounce and denounce all his former sins.

8. Confession of sin usually opens the heart of both saint and sinner to the penitent. Nothing seems to melt some folks like a confession of sin. Especially is this true of the one to whom the confession is made, no matter whether it is merely a humble expression of one's short-comings, or an apology for past wrongs. But few people will or can resist a humble, sincere, manly apology for past injuries.—Luke 15:17-21.

The most effective kind of preaching is usually done when some penitent sinner breaks down in humble contrition, and confesses to his former sins and wickedness. The writer has no doubt that if all professing christians were to confess all their sins which they have committed against their fellowmen, there would break out such a revival as would surprise even the most sanguine. The greatest hindrance to the cause of truth and righteousness is the refusal of wicked men to confess their sins. Sometimes a revival meeting will be blocked till some stubborn person breaks down, confesses his sins and turns to God. Many a revival has started by a humble confession on the part of some sinner or of some backslidden Church member. The work is hindered more by the lack of confession on the part of professing christians than on the part of acknowledged sinners.

9. God wants the people as well as the priest to confess their sins. God answered Daniel's prayer for himself and for his people when he confessed his own sins, and the sins of his people.—Dan. 9:20f. The priest was required to confess not only his own sins, but also the sins of his people.—Lev. 16:20ff; Neh. 1:6; Heb. 9:7. This common confession is necessary because of our mutual influence over each other for evil, and because of our responsibility for each other's conduct more or less. Moreover this duty of common confession forbids our defending another man in his sins, and calling wrong right, and right wrong. The prophet pronounces a woe upon those who confuse moral principles. He said; "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light,

and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."—Isa. 5:20.

II. There are a number of observations to be made on the general principles of confession. Confession in the Scriptures is used in two senses. One is an acknowledgment of having been in the wrong, and the other is, that a person needs spiritual help. The very acknowledgment of having done wrong implies that the confessor intends to correct his wrong conduct, or that he desires to do so. That is the reason why the confession of sin makes the confessor more ready to receive help, and others more ready to give it. Then the confession of sin makes the confessor's friends sympathize with him in his efforts to reform, and to lend him aid and encouragement. Sometimes even sinners who care not to repent themselves for the present, will encourage some other sinner who desires to repent.

1. Keeping many faults in secret only aggravates the faults concealed. All sins must be confessed either to God or to man, according to circumstances. Sins against man must be confessed to man. If they are not so confessed when circumstances permit it, concealment seems to aggravate and irritate the soul. All sins against others must be confessed to those wronged, not necessarily to anybody else. The confession of sins to others besides the one wronged, or instead of to the one wronged, may cause one more trouble instead of getting him out of trouble. Outside persons acting as or treated as "father confessor" often make more instead of less trouble. As a rule. such persons are no help to either party. The Savior's advice to

"tell him his fault between thee and him alone," is the wisest.—Mat. 18:15.

2. The confession of one's faults or sins frees the conscience, and the person from a feeling of hypocrisy, and in some degree from the feeling of condemnation. —Pss. 32 and 51. This is partly because the acknowledgment of sin is a practical repudiation of that sin, and puts one's self on record against the sin confessed. And as suggested before, confession is also a kind of burning of bridges behind one, to prevent his return to his former sins. David's sins oppressed and troubled him day and night till he confessed them. He found immediate relief and forgiveness when he confessed.—Ps. 32:1-5.

3. The acknowledgment of sin very often causes others to avoid it. In fact, personal confession is one of the most effective ways of preaching. This accounts for the fact that redeemed toughs are so effective in evangelistic work in reaching other sinners of like character. Their success is due not so much to their able preaching as it is to their personal confession and testimony. No one can warn against a sin so effectively as those who have been redeemed from it. Their warning too, is more effective because they are more in earnest about it. For they feel the need of it more than does any one else.

Nothing begets mutual love like confession and reparation. The confession of sin to the one wronged or to the offended will cause the offender and offended to love each other, and especially if the offended meets the offender with a hearty forgiveness, and the confession is complete and earnest. And the acknowl-

edgment of a wrong will usually lead the offended to forgive the offender. Of course there is always a possibility of failure in anything that depends upon a man's free moral agency. But the probabilities all point in the direction of the above postulates.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Conditions and Limitations of Confession.

AS CONFESSION to men is for the purpose of making reparation for wrongs done to them, and of regaining their confidence, so one's confidence must be co-extensive with the wrong he has done, and the confidence he has forfeited through his wrong-doing. To this may occasionally be added that sometimes a wrong-doer may have lost the confidence of the Church or of the community through his misdoings; and in such a case. a public confession may be wisest and best, and required by the exigencies of the case. Circumstances may altar cases here too. On one hand, too much public confession may be taken as an attempt to curry favor by overdoing civilities and acknowledgments. On the other hand, relieving a Church from disgrace and reproach may require a public confession from a member who has been a hypocrite or backslidden.

I. Christ gave several rules which were appropriate and very wise for the proper and complete disposition of all troubles, both serious and light. He not only told men what to do, but also the proper order and procedure. As a rule, these advices are applicable to all cases, and should not be omitted nor varied, except for very good and strong reasons.

1. His first rule was, "If thy brother trespass against thee. go and tell him his fault between thee

and him alone. If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."—Mat. 18:15. So wrongs done only to one, and known only to one, need be confessed to none but that one. This is not simply a permission, but a positive command. Christ re-enforced this command by similar advice in another place. "Take heed to yourselves; If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."—Luke 17:3. God does not design that the knowledge of evil shall spread. Telling other people instead of the offender makes new wounds instead of healing old ones. The Psalmist put it very wisely when he said, in declaring the rules of admission to God's kingdom, "He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor."—Ps. 15:4. This states both sides of the question. No one is allowed needlessly to spread the knowledge of a wrong, neither is any one allowed to receive and pass on a wrong that he has heard about. Nobody is allowed to start a mere slander; neither is any one allowed to receive it, or to circulate it. It does not help the one to whom a slander is told, but often excites his suspicion and opposition. That is usually what it is told for. It does not help the offender, but it is more likely to exasperate him. So the divine rule is, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."

2. When private and solitary admonition fails, Christ tells us plainly what to do. "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."—Mat. 18:16. His advice is to take one or two, not everybody. This forbids spread-

ing it any further till more efforts are made at reconciliation. If these further efforts succeed, the matter is to be dropped. One or two more are to be taken as protectors to the one making efforts at reconciliation. and to re-enforce his former persuasion. These extra witnesses are to help reconcile, and not hinder. These extra witnesses should be friends to both parties, and not to one only, lest they hinder by prejudicing the other party against their personal friend.

3. Christ gives further specific directions of procedure when all these preliminary efforts fail. "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man, and a publican."—v. 17. The Church is to be informed and its aid invoked against obstinate offenders against the law and order of the Church, as well as against its individual members. This effort too, is not for judgment and punishment, but for reconciliation. God is very long-suffering, and wants his people to be so too. When all possible human efforts fail, then only have we the divine permission to cease further efforts or hopes for reconciliation. Even at such a juncture, no expressed permission is given to tell it to the world. Such may be allowed, but if so, it is not expressed. But the manner of the putting of previous permissions to tell would imply no further permissions to tell others, but simply and quietly to drop the matter. Permission to explain may be given because of the disposition of some people to misrepresent the real state of the difficulties they refuse to settle.

II. The application of the principles just discussed

will settle most all questions arising from personal differences and difficulties. The Bible is a book of principles, and not a book of rules. Rules may change with circumstances and conditions; but the great principles of righteousness never do. Rules are usually an attempt to apply general principles to present conditions. The application of the aforesaid principles as well as their specific statement, are appropriate for present-day conditions and difficulties.

1. Concerning confession there are two points especially which need illumination. Both hang upon the same general principle. The first point which needs emphasis is, that when a wrong is confessed or repaired, the confession is to be made to the one who was wronged. God forbids that the knowledge of wrong shall spread needlessly. He does not want the wronged to tell anybody; neither does he want the wrong-doer to do so. This and what follows indicate that news of sin must not spread if it can possibly be avoided. In Ps. 15:3, a man is forbidden "to take up a reproach against his neighbor." In Eph. 5:3, 12, some things are not to be mentioned. All of this implies that if wrongs are mentioned at all, they must be mentioned only to those who have been wronged, to the wrong-doer, to some who may need protection from imposition, and to those who can instruct and help them in adjusting their wrongs or differences.

2. There are some people who are thoughtless or fanatical, who teach that all sins, no matter whether public or private, and no matter whether decent or modest or not, must be confessed in public. Those

who teach such a doctrine are generally of the malicious, gossipy, busybody disposition, which hungers for the obscene and the slanderous. Public confessions only gratify the evil desires of such folks, and give greater occasion for, and incentives to evil. Public confession of private sins will often do more harm than good. It is the one who has been wronged that needs the confession and reparation, and not the public. I heard of a Church which got as an evangelist to hold a meeting, a minister who taught that all sins of whatever kind or degree, should be confessed in public. Some of the christians who had confessed to God and the wronged years before, and had been forgiven by both God and the offended, had lived a saved live above reproach, and had won the respect of all by an upright walk and a Godly conversation, and were living lives of usefulness and piety, were made to feel and believe that they ought to make a public confession of private sins and wrongs committed years before they were even saved or made any profession. They publicly confessed private wrongs which had been years before confessed privately to man and God, and had been forgiven by both. The result was that crowds of curiosity-seekers came to Church to hear private and sensual sins of various kinds confessed. These were all discussed by the public for weeks to come. Some who had formerly lived reformed lives of integrity and self-respect, became the butt of ridicule to many, and were discouraged and disgusted with themselves and with gossipers, backslid and were never reclaimed. Although that was years ago, that Church has never recovered from its

awful folly, and the result of such unscriptural teaching.

3. Another question of vital importance here is that of priestly absolution and confession. The same principles which decided the status and application of the former question, settle this one also. Nothing except confusion and ignorance, and occasionally inability to handle one's own case properly, necessitates priestly confession, and that only for instruction or mediation, and not for absolution and penance. Sometimes a priest can act as a kind of a mediator between folks who have been enstranged, and help them in adjusting their difficulties, and in becoming reconciled. Otherwise wrongs are to be confessed only to the wronged, and to nobody else. The priest is the natural spiritual instructor of the ignorant. And if any one needs spiritual counsel, the priest ought not only to be willing, but able to give it. He ought to be willing to act as a mediator too, whenever occasion demands it.

But it is possible to confess to a priest, and be just as far from true repentance as before. Moreover it is so much easier to confess to a priest than it is to the one who has been wronged. Most people, too, would far rather confess to a priest than to confess and make reparation to the one wronged. But many priests insist upon confession, not because they want to help the ignorant and hesitating, but to keep the people at their mercy, and in ecclesiastical bondage. For the priesthood of confessional Churches not only show a class spirit, but hold their parishioners in ecclesiastical bondage, and "lord it over God's heritage."—I Pet. 5:3. The priesthood of confessional

Churches are more desirous to have their laity confess to the priests than they are for men to make confession and reparation to the ones wronged. Their purpose and plan is not so much to get men right with God or their fellowman, but rather to get them where they can hold them in bondage, and the laity of such Churches are always held in bondage to the priesthood.

The results of priestly confession are not commending to the conscience. It is a fact very patent to all, that neither the ministers nor members of sacerdotal Churches are noted for their piety. This broad fact shows that priestly confession does not make saints, nor produce saintliness either in the priests or in the people. The very form, manner, and substance of confession may bring temptations to both priest and confessor. The facts of history prove this argument. The confessional usually makes people worse instead of better. But God's ordinances are designed to help people's souls and not hinder them. As every tree is known by its fruits, so also is this tree known by its fruits. If so, it is a very bad tree.

4. Another species of wrong is that when a confession and reparation has been made for any kind of a wrong, it is unjust, odious and malicious for the one to whom the confession has been made. or to whom reparation or restitution has been made, to make the confession public, or make stock of it, or boast of it, or do anything else which would embarrass the confessor, or prejudice the public against him. It is very wrong for any one on account of pride, malice or selfishness to exalt himself above some one who has voluntarily humbled himself to make confession and rep-

aration. The same principles which forbid a man to tell any one except the offender before a wrong is rectified, would much more forbid him to do so after it has been righted, unless it be to defend the penitent. It is the same principles which excuse doctors and ministers from testifying against such as have been patients and parishioners, who have committed confidences to them. Such a betrayal of sacred trusts generally springs from secret malice or a selfish pride, which would delight in taking advantage of the weak and helpless, or even of seeking penitents. Such a needless betrayal is unkind and unjust, and needs confession and reparation to merit forgiveness. It is very wrong to injure needlessly an impenitent sinner. If so, how much more a penitent one.

5. Related to this is another species of wrong also frequently overlooked. Divine justice does not allow men to become needlessly angry with one another. Usually an unjustifiable malice underlies it. So Christ himself says, "Whosoever shall be angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."—Mat. 5:22. It is unjust and unkind to any man to make evil out of his innocency. This is a species of injustice and unforgivingness too. For whosoever will become angry with his brother without a cause, will still retain his anger when the supposed or alleged cause is removed. Getting angry with another without a just cause is generally due to one of two things. One is a kind of pride which is offended at rebuke; and the other is a secret malice, which is looking for an opportunity for becoming angry, and has some show of reason for so doing. Sometimes people

become angry at acts intended as a kindnesses. Becoming angry without a cause is a sign of a very bad heart. It is dishonest as well as malicious; for such usually pretend that the object of their malice has done something which he has not, or intended to do something that he did not. I have known such malicious people to demand an apology for what was intended as a kindness. and was so recognized by everybody except those who were angry already. Such need rebuke, instead of catering to their whims, or pandering to their pride or prejudices. Misrepresenting either one's innocence or his intended kindnesses is malicious, unjust and dishonest, and deserves severe censure and rebuke.

6. Sometimes it is no longer possible to make reparation or restitution or confession to the one wronged. And God does not require things which are impossible; neither should people. There are several conditions which might prevent the proper reparation of any wrong. There are three different conditions, any one of which would make any reparation impossible. The one wronged may have died, moved away to parts unknown, or never have been known or recognized in the first place. A number of years ago a man asked me about another gentleman whom he had insulted years before, and inquired the place of his residence if still alive. I informed him that the gentleman of whom he inquired had been dead a long time. He said that he had insulted him during the civil war. And after he became a christian, he had felt condemned over it for years, and desired to make apologies to him, and ask his forgiveness. Not un-

frequently it has happened that some one who has been wronged has moved away to parts unknown, and cannot be located. This is especially true where both parties to a difficulty have moved several times since the commission of the wrong. It is better to right up all wrongs before people separate; or better still, never commit the offense. In the case of burglary, theft, or insult, the offender may never know who the victim was. In the case of purse-snatchers in a big crowd, one might never recognize his victim, as he is watching the purse and not the face. And in the case of injuries performed in the dark. one may never know who the other fellow was. Of course in a great many instances inquiry or advertising may serve to ascertain. But otherwise in all of these cases, reparation is impossible.

David could never repair the wrong done to Uriah. Uriah was dead and gone, and gone forever. All that David could do now was to confess to God, and do better in the future. So he did confess to God, and he did better in the future. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."—Ps. 51:4. God graciously forgave him, and freely restored him.

Judas could not persuade the chief priests to release Christ, nor to receive again the bribe which they had given him. He could only throw the money down, and leave it there. The wrong was not so much in receiving the money, but in the betrayal which it bought. Judas could do all that he might, he could never avert the results of his treason. Those malicious, bloodthirsty Jews would never receive their bribe back,

nor release Christ, even if Judas did declare that He was innocent. The testimony of Judas, Pilate, the centurion, and the thief on the cross, do not weigh a feather against their bitter thirst for His innocent blood. Judas did all that he could to make reparation but he failed to make confession to Christ, and ask His forgiveness, and trust in His mercy.

Peter told the Jews assembled on Pentecost that they had taken Christ with wicked hands, and had slain him. They were cut to the heart, and cried, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They could never right that wrong. They could only confess it, and do better. Christ was dead, buried, resurrected, and ascended. He was far beyond their reach now in any way. So Peter made no great effort to have them make reparation. But he did require the only possible thing to do, and that was to confess their sins, and be baptized in the name of the One they had wronged. This was their repentance and confession. When confession can no longer be made to men, it must be made to God, to relieve one's conscience and to prepare for faith—Ps. 51:1-4. A great public wrong like the trial and murder of Jesus Christ must be publicly confessed to rebuke their own conduct, and repudiate it before the world.

7. Sometimes God requires a reparation of wrongs even after the injured one was dead, or is otherwise gone beyond one's reach or knowledge. This may help the wrong-doer, but does not help his victim. The relatives of an injured person have some rights too, and should not be disregarded. A man in Massachusetts told me that through mistakes in settlements

he had gotten money which belonged to two other men. Soon afterward, both of them died. But he found no rest nor peace till he made restitution to one's wife and to the other's children. Neither the wife of the one nor the children of the other wanted to receive anything. But he said that he must give it, and they must take it, for otherwise he should have no peace. After that he was always cheerful and happy. He had found his way to the mercy seat, and had obtained mercy. The Mosaic law required that if a man had wronged another as to his possessions, and the injured man had died, and had no relatives to receive his restitution, he should add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the Lord.—Num. 5:6-8. This relieves the conscience, and also adds influence to a man, because restitution to the Lord would show a man's sincerity and earnestness.

8. God often blesses people on credit, when he sees that their credit is good. The writer was holding a meeting in New Hampshire. After sermon the altar was filled with earnest, anxious seekers. Among them was a middle-aged lady. The evangelist spoke to each one personally about his difficulties and obligations to God, and pointed them to Christ. After the altar service continued for some time, it was dismissed, and testimonies called for. This lady confessed that she had a great burden on her heart, and knew not why. After close of the meeting the writer spoke to her again about the difficulties in the way of an immediate acceptance of Christ. After some questioning, she finally admitted that she had been a christian before, but had backslidden while she and her husband were

having a quarrel. She was told that if she felt that she had done wrong she must confess it and make reparation. She finally agreed to do so. She was told that she must do so on her first opportunity after she was convinced that she ought to do so. She finally agreed to do so. She was called to the altar again. After a few prayers she received pardon and peace. Her husband a few days later expressed great confidence in her, and her two daughters were both happily converted to God. On the following evening she testified that she had been so happy the night before that she could not sleep. But the point is that God graciously forgave her before she had any opportunity to make any reparation, and had made none, but had faithfully promised to do so.

If God did not sometimes bless people on credit, they would be lost. Suppose, for instance, a man who had stolen, or cheated others out of large sums of money should be converted late in life. He may not have either time or strength left sufficient to earn the money with which to pay all his victims. His only hope is for God to bless him on a credit, when he faithfully promises to walk in all the light that he has, and do his best to reimburse the victims of his dishonesty as soon and as far as possible. The writer has heard of men who were converted while on their way to make reparation and restitution. God knows when a man's heart and purpose become right, and blesses him from that moment.

Furthermore, God wants to bless men so that they may be able as well as willing to do right, and to do right discreetly. It is hard for some men to do right

without having the empowerment of a special blessing. Some men can scarcely overcome sin, and especially their besetting sin, till they are converted. This furnishes another strong reason for God to bless or convert men on credit, when He sees that their credit is good. Conversion will lend them both wisdom and strength even to make reparation and restitution, especially when considerable time and effort is required.

9. There are instances where it is possible to make confession and apology, and yet it may not be wisest or best to do so. The conditions and circumstances of both the wronged and the wrong-doer may have so changed, or may have become such that both modesty and propriety, and both peace and happiness of all concerned, may forbid the merest mention of the wrong to the injured, or to any one else. There is more than one kind of this form of wrong. For instance, two young persons may have kept company. In their separation, one may have wronged the other intentionally or through misunderstanding. But since their separation, both may have married. Then one or the other, or possibly both, may later have come to repentance, and suffer keenly for the wrong committed years before, and feel impelled to make confession, and if possible, reparation. To do so, however, might revive old memories and affections, and thus might make matters worse instead of better.

Again, a man may have wronged one of the opposite sex, and one or both may have since married. In such cases the best interests and happiness of all concerned may require the wrong to be buried in oblivion, and forbid its future mention under any cir-

cumstances. For circumstances may be such that the merest mention of any kind, or the slightest suggestion or intimation of any kind concerning the past may tear open an old wound that has been years in healing. This would be only adding one wrong to another, instead of righting one. Such instances are not very rare either; but are very annoying to those who want to become faithful and conscientious. Moreover the mere confession of such wrongs to the opposite sex may of itself become temptations to both. And confessions are to remove temptations, and not make them. There have been instances where such confessions have led not only to temptation, but also to sin. That is not all. The writer has heard of a vile woman who pretended to be confessing to an earnest christian man, for the very purpose of seducing him, and succeeded in so doing, and then boasted of it. It was only after much trouble and terrible struggle that he was reclaimed.

Sometimes also the explanations necessary to a proper understanding of offensive conduct may be as bad or worse than the conduct itself. Several years ago the writer was holding a series of meetings in a destitute community. During the preaching services, a young man in the back part of the house appeared to be making sport, and trying to disturb the worship. On invitation, he among others held up his hand for prayers. He then turned to the young man sitting by him, and laughed. I reproved him quite sharply for his apparent trifling with sacred things. He ceased part of his demonstrations, but continued others. When a collection was taken, he borrowed a dollar to give

to the evangelist. That started a query in the writer's mind as to his sanity. The gentleman who entertained the preacher explained to him that he was half-witted. He remarked that he knew that I would not have reproved him so sharply had I known it. I said, "Certainly not." For I very much dislike to see anybody impose on the innocent, or helpless, or those defective in any way. But I said that I did not know how to apologize to him, and explain my reproof, and its following apology, without an explanation which would be offensive and practically insulting to him. So instead of apology, I always tried to bear with him, and treat him with special kindness afterward. In such cases, persons can show their consideration and regret by a kind and judicious course of conduct toward such people.

In such cases as the preceding and the following, silence is golden. The indiscretion of indiscriminate confession was first suggested to me by a man who had a personal experience like the former one. He had not observed proper prudence and modesty toward a certain married lady. When he began seeking the Lord, he apologized to this woman, and asked her if he should also apologize to her husband. She very promptly replied that it would do no good, and would only make bad matters worse, instead of better. No matter if he had done as bad himself, such men usually are unreasonable. Confessions and apologies are to remove and smooth difficulties, and not to make more, and not to make worse what is already bad enough.

For the same reason, it frequently is best to wait till people are in a proper mood to receive an apology,

before attempting to offer such. As a rule though, the sooner an apology is made the better it is for all concerned. Christ gave Peter an humble grieved look when the cock crew, and He knew that Peter had failed to be true to his vows. But when Peter had partially considered the matter and repented, he talked to him about his love and devotion to his Savior. Peter was then ready to admit everything.

10. Sometimes the one wronged may not want to receive any restitution, but simply to forgive. But usually this is not best. For sometimes when such a person is no longer a friend, he becomes a bitter enemy. In such case, he is liable to make stock of it, and then exact more than is just. Such persons then often become angry and unreasonable, and make unjust accusations and demands against the other party. These suppositions are not only possible; but such cases have come under the writer's observation. So it is well to remove any occasion for future accusations and contentions.

CHAPTER XIV.

Repentance of Other People's Sins.

WHEN first suggested to them, some people wonder how any one should or could repent of another's sins. But it is very clear when explained to them. For God holds a man responsible not only for all the sins which he commits, but also for all the sins which he influences others to commit, and for many of the sins which others commit which he could prevent if he would. Most people never or rarely think of this. Some can scarcely believe that Cain's question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" is at all applicable to them. But men rarely if ever go singly either to heaven or to hell. John Wesley is credited with saying, "You cannot go to heaven alone. You must take somebody with you." That may be too strong. But it expresses a truth nevertheless. Paul told the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."—Acts 16:31. This expresses not only the possibility, but also the responsibility of saving one's own family. And men are responsible for all that is possible in the realms of grace.

There are several ways in which men are responsible for all that is possible in the realms of grace, and consequently for the sins of others. First, By teaching, tempting or persuading men to sin; Second, By influencing others to sin by a bad example; Third, By

provoking others to commit sin by offensive or annoying or aggravating conduct. All of these are positive sins. There remains another kind for which men are responsible, which is a negative one; Fourth, By a neglect to warn others against their sins. In the matter of evil influence there are two classes. First, there are those who sin by leading others into sin; and second, there are those whom we could lead to a better life if we would, and whom we could prevent from committing some of their sins if we would. The first is a sin of commission, and is far more wicked than is the sin of omission to warn and save. Of those who commit the positive kind of sin there are two classes also. First, there are those who lead others into sin knowingly and intentionally, either from sheer malice, or from a pure love of wickedness; and secondly, Those who lead others into sin by mistake, not knowing or thinking that some things are wrong, by mistaking error for truth, and wrong for right, and by mere thoughtlessness. God wants His people to use all their influence for good, and be a positive factor for righteousness, as well as simply to do good in the way of kindnesses. All soldiers and citizens and patriots are not only supposed to be true and loyal to their country, but also to fight for it if need be.

The neglect to warn and save those whom God has committed to the care of another, is termed hatred and murder in the Bible. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him."—Lev. 19:17. Neglect of the spiritual welfare of one's neighbor is here termed hatred. While in the New

Testament it is said, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."—I John 3:15. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."—Prov. 14:24. Yet foolish parents sometimes plead their great love for their children as an excuse for their neglect to correct or punish them. It is difficult for the thoughtless to realize that they murder those whom they neglect to warn. The rebuke is not simply the purpose or end in itself, but only a means to an end, "and not suffer sin upon him," or "to save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."—Jas. 5:20.

These principles are recognized by society in daily life. The telegraph operator who neglects to give proper orders to an on-coming train, is held responsible for its destruction, if its destruction is due to the lack of proper orders. He is held responsible not only by the railroad officials, but by the civil law and by society at large also. Such cases are frequently so decided in court. In a rear-end collision, the conductor of the train ahead is held responsible for the collision. For in case he stops, he is required to send a brakeman back with a flag to warn any train coming from the rear.

There are two great classes of people in regard to their attitude toward sin and righteousness. One class unduly magnifies mercy at the expense of justice; and the other magnifies justice at the expense of mercy. Both are partly right, and partly wrong. The true ideal is reached "when mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and truth have kissed each other."—Ps. 85:10. But the law comes before the

gospel, and justice precedes mercy, and righteousness prepares the way for lasting peace. The Psalmist recognized that righteousness was not only a condition of peace existing, but also a condition of peace coming. He says, "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness."—72 : 3. Isaiah agrees with the Psalmist when he says, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."—32 : 17.

There is a peace which does not have its basis in righteousness; but it is neither true nor lasting. There is a peace which comes from acquiescence in sin and wrong. There is peace of death as well as a peace of life. The peace which God gives through righteousness, is true, profound and lasting. It is also very attractive and influential. Moreover that peace which comes from the reign of righteousness is the only kind that is lasting. The wise man was surely right when he said, "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged,"—Prov. 16 : 6; and "by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."—3 : 7; 16 : 6. By truth alone, sin is shown up; by mercy alone, it is covered up; but by mercy and truth together, it is cleaned up.

These two principles in action among christians are christian reproof and christian forgiveness. Both of these duties are obligatory upon christians in their proper order. It is the christian's duty to stop men from sinning when and where it is possible. There are several ways in which to do this. One can do it by good example, by instruction and admonition, by christian reproof, by prayer for others, by personal

force and by law enforcement. Any one, or all of these may be used as occasion may demand, or in their proper order. Moreover the steps to be used appropriately depends upon the station, age and faults of the erring, and upon the station, age and official position of the one who administers the reproof.

I. There are three classes of persons who are recognized as especially responsible for the moral conduct of others. They are the civil, moral and religious. These classes are responsible for the conduct of the people especially in the state, home and school, and Church. Of course each class has responsibility beyond its own prescribed sphere, but it has an especial jurisdiction within that territory or place or position to whch it has been appointed or elected.

1. The civil or state officers constitute the first class. In this country men are elected for the very purpose of preventing or punishing crime. They are charged with it, sworn under oath to do it, and are responsible for it. It is the duty of the men who in the providence of God are called to positions of trust and authority, to do their best to secure the righteous observance of civil law. Paul in his terse way, wrote to the Romans, "He that ruleth, let him do it with diligence."—Rom. 12:12. It is an official's duty to be faithful in his work. In the next chapter, Paul said, "There is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. . . . He is the minister of God to thee for good; . . . a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers attending continually upon this very thing."—13:1-6.

All of this means that they are in the order of God's providence; that it is their bounden duty to prevent or punish crime; and that they must be obeyed and supported, if they are law-abiding themselves, and are honestly, earnestly and fairly trying to enforce the law.

There is a sense also in which every citizen is responsible for the observance and enforcement of the civil law. This is evident in several ways. Firstly, In some states the civil law requires any one seeing or knowing of a violation of the law, to report it to the proper authorities. In all states any man can be summoned before a grand jury to report a crime, or before a petit jury to testify against a criminal. There is no excuse except sickness or death, or some other providential hindrance. Secondly, If any man wilfully and knowingly conceals a crime or criminal, he is particeps criminis, and is liable to indictment or punishment too. Such is called accessory after the act. Thirdly, Any able-bodied citizen can be deputized to assist in the arrest and imprisonment of any criminal. If such will not assist when so deputized, he is arrested and indicted, too. From the above facts, it is very plain that every citizen as well as the officers of the law are more or less responsible for the enforcement of the law, and for the establishment of justice.

The Scriptures are very positive and plain concerning the duties of civil officers. The Lord not only makes it the privilege of the officers of the law to execute the law, and to prevent and punish crime, but makes it their bounden duty as well, and punishes them for neglecting their duty, or abusing their office. Saul

was called, appointed and anointed to be king over Israel by God Himself. But when he neglected to execute God's wrath upon a heathen people, and their wicked king, he was not only soon removed from the throne, but his own sons were forever deprived of the privilege of succeeding him in the kingship.—I Sam. 13:8-16; 15:1-35. Samuel was commanded to tell Saul, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king."—I Sam. 15:23. The word rejected was a command to punish the heathen king, Agag.

2. There is another class of people who are held especially responsible for others on account of having been providentially placed in the care of children. This class includes both parents and teachers. The responsibility of parents is the greater of the two. They are the natural guardians, protectors and teachers of their own children. The Mosaic law made parents responsible for teaching their own offspring the precepts of the law, for the neglect of which they were severely punished. Jacob's partiality was punished by long years of trouble and sorrow. The last years of his life were darkened and saddened by its results. David nearly lost his kingship over Israel because he did not exercise a judicious headship over his own family. Not only so, but most all of his troubles in the latter part of his reign grew out of his own negligence. Old Eli lost his own life, and so did his two boys, all in one day, "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."—I Sam. 3:13; 4:11-18. He chided them, but he neither punished nor prevented their sins.

On the other hand, we have a positive command

for parents to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."—Eph. 6:4. In the New Testament Church no man was allowed to take an important office in the Church who did not have good home government. For this reason was assigned, "If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?"—I Tim. 3:5. Principles which will not work well in a home, will not work well in a Church. The plan of government in the two is very much the same. It is not only the principles, but also the person, too. There are some people who cannot rule well, no matter how wise they are. It takes a certain type of temperament and disposition to make a good ruler in home or Church either.

Furthermore Abraham was chosen to be the father of the Jewish nation because he was recognized as a good and faithful father in the family. "The Lord said, For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him."—Gen. 18:19. Abraham not only had a little influence at home, but a sufficient influence to make and mold his whole family. And he did it too. So ought every father and mother to do.

John Wesley said that parents stood in the place of God to their children. Children know not God; but they are acquainted with their parents, and better than with anybody else. And to their mind, parents represent the best, wisest and greatest in humanity of which they know. This fact only emphasizes the

responsibility of parents for their children. So God makes every father the natural high priest of his own family. As the father and the mother represent the highest and best ideal of which the child knows, it is the more important that the embodiment of his ideal is not a perversion of righteousness. A man's moral life is the tallest and longest sermon which he is capable of preaching. In the end it has the greatest influence too.

The other great leaders which God chose for Israel were men who walked in all His commandments and ordinances blameless themselves, and taught their families so. As examples of God's choice, we have Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Nehemiah, Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, and himself too. It is only reasonable to suppose that God would follow His own rules in the choice of leaders. He lived up to His own commands. On the other hand we see that the children of divinely chosen and recommended parents have become noble, good and great. We see this in the father of Noah, Moses, Samuel, Sampson, Solomon and John the Baptist. All of them were good, great and wise men. And no doubt these illustrious sons owed much of their greatness and influence to the teaching and example of their fathers.

3. Prophets and ministers are called, appointed and anointed of the Lord for the special work as religious teachers. They are not only called to do that sort of work under a divine obligation, compulsion and penalty, or a woe as Paul called it, but they are also under obligation to do it right. Jonah received a large city appointment, just the kind many ministers

prefer. But it was new and outside of his native land, and so he refused to go. He did more. He tried to leave the country, and started in the opposite direction. God providentially compelled his return to his native land, and commanded him to go to his appointment. He then repented of rejecting the call of the Lord. But the proper repentance of the call naturally carried with it the immediate acceptance of the call. Paul said that if he himself did not preach he would be punished. "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." Moses, Ezekiel and Jeremiah were all called of God, and pressed into the service of their king against their own will. All of these resisted their first call, not because they did not want to do the work of the Lord to which they were called, but because they felt unworthy and insufficient for the task. All of these were owned of the Lord, but strange as it may seem, those who had the strongest call, were the most bitterly persecuted by men. But in spite of the opposition of wicked men, God did not excuse them from their unpleasant task of denouncing the sins of their people and time.

Ezekiel received a special command to preach against the sins and wickedness against which Israel needed to be warned. God required him to preach "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear." —2:5-7. Preachers are tempted to leave the most common and the most popular sins of their community go unrebuked, and denounce only those which are unpopular already. Some would preach against the sins of other communities, nations or ages, and neglect to denounce those of their own. In fact, many ministers

are inclined to condone the popular sins of their own community, and excuse them, or even defend them. Such ministers usually call evil good, and good evil. They feel that they must preach against sin. But as they do not want to preach against the sins of the community, they usually preach against the righteousness of the community. The minister who will not preach against the liquor saloon makes an effort to discount the temperance cranks, as he would call them. Isaiah had the same difficulty to meet in his day, and pronounced a "woe upon them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."—Isa. 5:20. No man can condone sin without decrying righteousness. When the spiteful jealous Jews said, "Release unto us, Barabbas," they said almost in the same breath, "Crucify the Christ." And the prophets of Baal killed the prophets of the Lord. Those who upheld slavery mobbed William Lloyd Garrison and killed Lovejoy.

We have another form of this sin in the case of Balaam. Balaam was a real prophet of the Lord. Even the heathen nations recognized this, and wanted his services. The world recognizes that it helps their cause along, if they can get good men enlisted on their side. So many would judge a cause not by its intrinsic merits and importance, but by its representatives. So Balak, king of Moab, offered Balaam a great reward if he would only curse the people of God. He hesitated at first, but finally Balak's bribes and entreaties were too much for him, and he consented to go. God forbade Balaam's going, but finally permitted him to go

after he had repented; but God demanded that Balaam bless His people, and not curse them. He did as God required him to do. But in so doing, he incurred the wrath and enmity of the Moabites and Balak. Many a minister has lost his spiritual life and power because he threw his efforts and influence on the wrong side. Balaam's dallying with his duty finally led to his downfall from which he never recovered.

The minister's responsibility in warning and preaching depends upon the needs of men, and his ability and opportunity. The divine instruction to Ezekiel is applicable to all preachers. He was commanded to warn them, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." Many excuse their indolence, negligence, and sometimes cowardice, by saying that all effort is of no use, or that it will do more harm than good. Sometimes these excuses are true, but quite often they are not. God requires his prophets to warn them anyway, no matter if they will not receive it, so that they will be left without excuse. God requires his prophets also to seek and pray for wisdom to make their work effective. The failure of much of the work is the minister's fault; but it is not all. For the Scriptures very plainly show that most of the failure is due either to the indifference or wickedness of the hearers themselves. Then again the ministers are making an earnest effort to do their duty, while many of their hearers are not. So that it is manifestly unfair to blame the one who is trying to do his duty, and excuse the one who is not.

God requires the prophet to declare the whole counsel of God, "whether they will hear, or whether

they will forbear." It is easy to declare the truth that the people want. Most ministers are perfectly willing to do that. But it is the unpleasant and unpopular truth usually that is needed, but is so much omitted. Ezekiel declares that it is the duty of the watchman upon the walls of Zion to warn its inhabitants of coming danger, no matter whether the inhabitants take heed or not. The Lord commanded Isaiah to preach to His people, even though they simply hardened their hearts against the truth. He was required to continue to warn them till they all backslid or forsook the word. Faithfulness sometimes results in people backsliding yet more, and refusing to listen longer to unpleasant truth.

Every christian is held more or less responsible for the souls of the people around him. Paul chides some of his contemporary christians, because that when they ought to be teachers, they themselves need to be taught.—Heb. 5 : 12. God holds christians responsible first, for the weak brethren and backsliders around them; and second, for all the sinners with whom they associate, and over whom they have an influence. James commanded his brethren to pray for and convert from the error of their ways those who had backslidden.—Jas. 5 : 19f. Paul exhorts the spiritually minded Galatians to restore those who were overtaken in a fault.—Gal. 6 : 1. The command in Lev. 19 : 17, is general and obligatory upon all christians, and equally so upon the laity, as upon the preachers. And the obligation is toward all men, both saint and sinner.

CHAPTER XV.

Repentance of Other People's Sins, Concluded.

II. Christian people are responsible in a sense for sins of all kinds. Nevertheless several kinds are particularly specified in Scripture, and reasons are assigned for our opposition thereto. In a sense we are more responsible for those which are specified than we are for those receiving only general mention. Of those specified there are four classes, and these include sins of nearly all kinds.

1. Sins against others seem to be mentioned more than any other kind. It is surprising to note how strong and frequent are the references to this form of transgression. When the rich young ruler came to Christ, and asked Him what good thing he should do to have eternal life, Christ replied, "Keep the commandments." When the young man asked which commandments, Christ replied again by naming only those commandments which enforce a man's duty toward his fellowman. Why these should be mentioned, and the others apparently ignored is not entirely clear. There are two possible reasons for emphasis upon this. One is that such commandments are more likely to be neglected than are those expressing a man's duty to God. Another is that God requires us to do our duty first to those who are near. Sins against man usually spring from hatred and malice and selfishness, and breed the same. While sins against God do

not spring so much from hatred against Him as they do from love of the world and a selfish ease. But repentance of them is fully discussed in another chapter, and need not be repeated here.

But there is another form of sin against others, which either is not clear to most people, or is overlooked by them. This is commonly known as injustice. This sin is repeatedly mentioned in Scripture, and is always condemned in strong terms. Many who would scorn to commit the gross or ordinary sins either, would have no scruples against this. Yet injustice was considered such a flagrant sin that Isaiah declares that it prevents many people's prayers from being answered.—1 : 12-15. After declaring God's disgust at their devotions, and His refusal to hear their prayers, he states the reason why : "Your hands are full of blood."—1 : 15. They had not killed anybody. They had simply permitted it to be done. He first mentions sins in general, and then definitely specifies their own sins, by exhortations to their opposite virtues. "Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Hatred commits murder. Indifference, selfish ease or policy permits it to be done. Zechariah too declares the same bitter truths. After mentioning the stubbornness, injustice and oppression of Israel, he adds, "Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of Hosts." As they would not hear the Lord, the Lord would not hear them, but dispersed them among their enemies.—Zech. 7 : 9-14. So we are commanded to reprove such, not only for the sake of those whom they injure by the commission or the permission of acts of injustice, but also for the sake of their own

souls. For both the salvation of their souls, and the answer to their prayers depend upon their repentance of such sins.—Isa. 59; Mat. 5: 23f.

Furthermore, no man can have a good influence over those whom he has wronged himself, or has permitted to be wronged by others. Parents nearly always defend their children, even though they are in the wrong. Much more should they defend their children when they are in the right. Husbands and wives usually defend each other right or wrong, when anybody opposes the other, even though they are in a quarrel with one another. Much more should men defend one another when they are in the right. When they do not so defend one another, it is because of malice on the one hand, and fear and policy on the other. In the first case, one is wrong, and in the second case, both are wrong, that is, the one who is unjust, and the other whom he fears or favors for policy's sake.

2. Then there are the sins committed against us by others. There are two general theories in regard to the way in which a man should treat those who sin against him. One is that he should ignore and overlook all their wrongs, and should receive and treat them with all kindness and love. The other theory is that he should rebuke them, and should show them only civil courtesy until they repent. Both of these methods have won transgressors to the offended and to Christ. Some people need one of these, and some need the other. But no matter which method is used, it is the manifestation of the truth and spirit of Christ, which brings men to Christ. The highest and best

balanced type of character is formed by the combination and influence of both of these elements. The fact is, we are commanded to manifest both of these qualities in a sort of a way. But most men are so one-sided and short-sighted that it seems difficult to see and hold two different kinds of truth in the mind at the same time.

We are commanded to be meek, to love our enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us; to pray for them that despitefully use us, and abuse us, to resist not evil, and not be contentious when people would oppress us, or take advantage of us; and to give food, drink and clothing to our enemies. —Mat. 5 : 38-48; Rom. 12 : 18-21. But there are several good reasons for so doing. That we may be like our heavenly Father, and that we may heap coals of fire upon the heads of our enemies, and overcome evil with good. A merciful and forgiving spirit manifested toward a sinner who is afraid to repent, or to show his repentance, for fear that the offended will take advantage of his confessions and concessions, will often lead such a one to Christ. On the other hand, if a sinner feels that both ministers and laity are afraid to declare the whole counsel of God either because of fear or of policy, he will more likely be influenced by a manifestation of courage, sterling integrity, and conscientiousness. Sinners have no confidence in, or respect for, moral cowards. They are not won to Christ by moral poltroons. Nor can they be favorably influenced by such.

On the other hand, we have positive commands to reprove and rebuke. "Take heed to yourselves. If thy

brother trespass against three, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."—Luke 17:3. Notice here that this is not sin in general, or against some one else, but against you personally. There is more than one reason why men should reprove those who sin against themselves. If men who are offended or injured do not do so, they are inclined to brood over their wrongs, and also to tell other people, neither of which is best. For either course usually breeds hatred in one's own heart, and the latter has the same influence over those to whom the wrongs are told. Neither of these helps the erring, but the latter is liable to make him worse. So we now see the grounds for the commands in Lev. 19:17, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." This gives a good reason, "and not suffer sin upon him." Most that is required of men is to save oneself or somebody else from sin. The reason given by Christ is, "and to gain thy brother."—Mat. 18:15. The reason given by James is to "save a soul from death."—5:20. The object of all testimony, instruction, exhortation, admonition and rebuke, is to win souls to Christ and to His righteousness.

Some talk and act as if rebuke was simply and only to denounce sin, or in a sort of a way to punish the sinner. Reproof is not the end in itself, but a means to an end. And reproof should seek the end required and prescribed. The truth is, we are commanded to reprove in such a way as to "restore the erring in the spirit of meekness."—Gal. 6:1. In Mat. 18:15-17, men are commanded not to denounce nor abuse, not in a

crowd nor in the presence of anybody else, but simply to "tell the transgressor his fault between thee and him alone." The object is to "gain thy brother." All our rebukes, admonitions and exhortations will be more effective if given for this purpose and in this spirit. If the deliverances of truth are given with this end in view, they are not likely to be harsh and unjust. If so, God is more likely to bless them; and people are more apt to receive them. So for these two reasons they are more likely to be effective. But men must always speak the truth in love, if they wish to produce the best effect.

3. Then again men are not allowed to sin against themselves. This may be done by sins of omission, or by sins of commission. The parables of the talents and of the pounds are very forcible inculcations of the positive duty of every man to make the most of his life. As it is a person's duty to do all the good he can, it is also his duty to prepare to do all the good he can. On the other hand, as it is a sin not to do good, it is also a sin not to prepare to do good. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."—Jas. 4:17. If the neglect of personal self-development be a sin, it would be a still greater sin to do anything which would weaken or destroy one's powers or influence for good, or usefulness in any way. After Christ had healed one long ill, He bade him "go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."—John 5:14. This was a mild rebuke for his past sins which caused his palsy, and a warning against their repetition in the future. When the Philippian jailer would have killed himself for fear of the punishment inflicted upon him

for the neglect of official duty, Paul forbade him saying, "Do thyself no harm."—Acts 16:28. Paul forbade fornication on the ground that it was a "sin against one's own body." It would be just as much of a sin to injure one's own body as it would be to injure the body of another. For the body of one is just as important and sacred as is the body of another. The civil law does not allow a man to burn his own house, or kill or unnecessarily injure his own stock, or his family. Neither is a man allowed by law to kill or to injure himself. If he attempts to commit suicide or to inflict bodily injury upon himself, and fails, he is arrested and imprisoned.

The fact that this principle is applied in civil law shows that men in general recognize its justice. It tries to prevent a man from destroying his own property or life or health. If a man becomes either drunk or insane, and is liable to injure himself or to get injured, he is arrested and put in prison, and sometimes in a padded cell to keep him from injuring himself. If he has any dangerous instruments or weapons, they are taken from him. In insane asylums they have what is called the suicide's room, which is so prepared and kept that the violent can have no means of injuring themselves. Sometimes when nothing else will succeed the violent are put into strait-jackets. All of these facts show that it is a generally recognized fact that it is wrong to injure oneself, either mentally or physically.

Most of the prohibitions of both parents and teachers are for the very purpose of preventing young people from injuring themselves. The Bible forbids

a man to injure his own body, which is called the temple of God. "Whoso defileth the temple of God, him shall God destroy."—I Cor. 3:17. The Bible prohibits men from marring or marking their bodies for purposes of mourning or religious ceremony either.—Lev. 19:27f; Deu. 14:1. For injuring the instrument or agent of God is injuring the cause of God; and defiling the temple of God is an insult to God who made it, and who wants to dwell there. No man can do his best for God if he weakens, much less destroys his own mental and physical powers. The above mentioned parables require men to make the most of their talents and opportunities. The neglect to do so in either case was severely punished. In these parables men were punished for the disuse of powers. How much more then would or should they be punished for their abuse. The neglect to do so in either case was severely punished. Men are punished for omission to do their best, as well as for sins of commission, when they do their worst. Paul said, "I keep my body under."—I Cor. 9:27.

4. When one man loves another, he does not want to see him abused nor to hear him slandered. He would reprove anyone whom he heard speaking evil of friends, and especially if he knew it to be untruthful and unjust. Some persons will resent anything said against their friends quicker than they will anything said against themselves. The same spirit of loyalty and spirit of justice would require a christian man to defend the claims and cause of God, under similar circumstances. This principle would require a christian man to rebuke anyone who would profane the name of God

in his presence, or malign the character of God, or injure the cause of God. When Ananias and Sapphira promised the proceeds of the sale of their property to the cause of Christ, and then gave only a part, Peter reproved them for lying, and God smote them. "Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."—Acts 5:4. The insult was, thinking they could deceive God, or that He would wink at their lie for the sake of their gift, as if His demand for honesty and justice could be bribed with filthy lucre. The injury was not only against those whom their hypocrisy would keep from coming to Christ, but also against the Christ of the cause as well as against the cause of Christ.—Acts 5:1-11. Christians are exhorted to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints."—Jude 3. To do so fully and faithfully they must defend Christ, His character, claims and cause against all attacks. This necessarily requires christians to rebuke those who speak evil of Christ in any way. So then these principles hold them responsible more or less for sins against God and His cause, and especially such sins as christians could prevent.

III. The purpose of christian reproof is not simply the gratification of personal pride, passion or prejudice. For that would take it entirely out of the realm of religion and righteousness. The christian religion requires its votaries to do all such things in the name and spirit of Christ, and for the benefit of humanity. So this would rule out all gratification or manifestation of any personal feelings. For any mere personal feelings would remove it from the realm of reproof to that of reproach and personal abuse. The former

springs from love, and the latter from hatred; the former is due to the love of righteousness, and the latter to the love of sin and self; in the first case the man wants to help his brother, and in the latter he is anxious to hinder him. The difference between the spirit and motive of the two separate them from each other as far as the poles. And it is the spirit and motive of these acts that decide their moral character. If the spirit and motive of such acts are Christlike such acts are christian; if they are otherwise, such acts are selfish and Satanic.

1. The first object of christian reproof is to save the sinner. All sin of any kind destroys the soul of the sinner. But Christ "came to seek and to save that which was lost."—Luke 19:10. Christ expects us to help him save the world. No man can be saved except by being saved from sin. No man is saved at all who is not saved from sin. No man can be saved from hell unless and until he is saved from sin. The fact is, the greatest hell a man can have is the consciousness of the guilt and power of his own sins. Therefore the first step toward real salvation is to turn the heart and mind of the sinner against it, so that he will want to forsake it entirely and forever. This is done by declaring God's righteousness, Rom. 3:25f, and His hatred against sin. This not only requires sin to be exhibited in all of its vileness and fullness, but also God's requirements of righteousness, and His holy wrath against all unrighteousness. Black never looks so black as when seen against a dark background. So sin never looks so dark and hideous as when reflected from the mirror of God's holy word, and emphasized

by the pure and beautiful life of Christ, and the absolute necessity of an infinite atonement for sin. The enormous price of the redemption of the human race is paralleled only by the awful depravity of a sin-cursed world. So preaching Christ and His holy word under the power of the Spirit convicts men of the vileness and sinfulness of sin. No man can properly reprove sin without also holding up the requirements of the law, and the infinite merits of the atonement.

The reproof may be for a single sin, or for an extended course of sinfulness. Moses and David, Saul and Eli, Peter and Simon the sorcerer, Ananias and Sapphira, were all rebuked for single sins, any one of which would cause the one committing it to lose his soul. We have satisfactory evidence that several of these were saved by their timely reproof; while some by a brazen course of deception added one sin to another, until there seemed to be no hope of renewing their reprobate minds and hearts. All preaching to sinners is a sort of a rebuke to a life of sin. And all faithful preaching is a rebuke to sin and sinfulness.

The object of all christian reproof is "not to suffer sin upon him," Lev. 19:17; to "convert a sinner from the error of his way, and save a soul from death," Jas. 5:20; to restore one "overtaken in a fault" back to the christian life again, Gal. 6:1; that they may thereafter "be sound in the faith," Tit. 1:13.

For this reason if possible all reproof should be given in such a spirit and manner as will lead men to repentance and to salvation; not that all reproof accomplishes its purpose, for it does not. Neither does the evident impossibility of accomplishing the real pur-

pose of all reproof relieve men of all responsibility for its administration. For ministers are to declare the whole counsel of God against sin, "whether men will hear or whether they will forbear."—Ezek. 2:5-7; 3:11, 25-27. This word is the more necessary, because most people neglect the duty of christian reproof, for the reason that it will do no good, or more harm than good. If all christians were to act upon such principles and impulses, nothing would ever be done. It is always easy to find or invent excuses for not doing unpleasant duties. God knew that. So that He gave repeated commands to be faithful in admonition.

Rebuke refers to the past or present, while warning refers to the present or future. Rebuke is directed toward sins already committed, or to sins now in the process of commission, in order to prevent if possible their commission or repetition. Warning is directed more to the results of sins to ourselves and to others, and to the punishments coming to our sins sooner or later. So then warning and admonition usually come before reproof. We cannot warn a sinner about the past. Neither can we reprove a man for something in the future.

2. Reproof is not only for the purpose of saving the sinner who has already committed sin, or who has been or is still living a life of sin, but it is also to hinder others from following his evil example, and committing sin also. Reproof is not only for saving those who have already gone into sin, but also to save people from going into sin. The whole object of christian reproof is to save men from a life of sin to a life of

righteousness. As the second object of reproof is to save men from the influence of a bad example in leading them to commit sin, those sins which are known to few, many or all, which are liable to lead any astray, are to receive a public rebuke, or at least before those whom they are liable to influence toward evil. So Paul rebuked Peter down at Antioch for his politic, cowardly course, which was liable to subvert and injure the whole Church there. For his course had already caused Barnabas and the Jews there to play the hypocrite, too.—Gal. 2 : 11-13.

This same principle settles it upon the other hand, that when a sin is not known to many or any others, the reproof is to be private, "between thee and him alone."—Mat. 18 : 15. For the main object of all reproof, which is the restoration of the erring, is accomplished by private reproof; whereas there is no danger from the influence of a bad example, unless it is unknown. Moreover, courtesy to the sinner and his friends, as well as the evil influence of bad example, requires that we make no unnecessary breach upon privacy. A kind, considerate and modest spirit does not desire any unnecessary exposure of the life or conduct of any sinner. Christian modesty dislikes unpleasant notoriety either for one's self or other people. A needless desire to give public reproof generally springs from a secret malice or an ambition to humiliate another by exposing him or publicly slurring him. The earnest desire to do a person good will and does cause one to want to make the reproof private and avoid all public exposure.

Of course there are some who can never be re-

formed from their long life of both secret and open sins except through public exposure and rebuke. This is true of grafting politicians, bootleggers and some other kinds of brazen sinners. Those who have followed a course of open flagrant sin for a long time are rarely reached by effeminate admonition. They usually need heroic treatment. Then such exposure is sometimes necessary to protect a thoughtless, credulous, hoodwinked public from unjust and dangerous imposition, and also to enlist their opposition to contagious sins.

The Scriptures too, insist that dangerous sins be exposed and rebuked. Paul exhorted Timothy, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." —I Tim. 5:20. Fear of punishment here as well as hereafter keeps a great many men from sinning. The Lord gave a command to Moses, that if a man's nearest relative or dearest friend tried to lead them into idolatry, the whole congregation were to assist in stoning him, "so that all Israel may hear and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness among you." —Deu. 13:6-11. It was because of their influence for evil, that God commanded the Canaanites and the Amalekites to be destroyed. For a greater reason, were the prophets of Baal and of the grove to be completely annihilated.

3. The Church of Christ represents Him on the earth. In it is supposed to be preached the truth as it is in Jesus, and in it is supposed to be practiced the precepts of Jesus. The members of Christ's Church are expected to believe and practice His teaching, and to be imbued with His spirit, and manifest it too. The

people of the world form their conception of Christ and His kingdom from the doctrine preached by His ministers, the conduct and conversation practiced, and the spirit manifested by both ministers and members.

These things being true, how important it is for Christ's representatives on earth to be like him, so as not to misrepresent him. Sinners will not believe christians no matter how they preach, profess or believe, if they tolerate anything less or different in themselves or others. If the practice of christians is all right, while they tolerate with indifference all the crookedness of others, men of the world will surely think that their righteous practices are merely for policy's sake, for a business or political pull, or for social position. For instance, the shrewdest politicians of the present day are not hard drinkers, but only moderate drinkers, or even total abstainers. They will point with pharisaic pride to their own practice, and then with an air of condescension and mock mercy, will prate about personal liberty, and the right of the majority to rule. The first appeals to the temperance people, and the second to the whiskey folks. So this plan is the politician's bid for both classes.

There are professing christian people also who will practice personal righteousness to win the confidence and good will of the good. At the same time they will tolerate all the crooked conduct, and the heretical teaching of the wicked for mere fear or for favor. Such people are usually more lenient toward respectable sinners than they are toward the strictest saint. They will bring the sturdiest saint to trial while excusing the backslidden professor, and smuggling the

crookedness of the hypocrite. Such people fear good straight, strong preaching. They do not care for preaching on mere experiences. They can profess all and the highest, and usually do. But it is when the minister preaches on the actual living, that they object. People can see whether men are living straight or not; but they cannot always see whether another has the genuine experience or not. This class of people see that it is a wiser policy than to preach a very high standard, and live a very low one; for such a course brands themselves as hypocrites of a very high order. While following this politic course, such a person may pose as a very strict and solemn saint, but also as one who is very kind, sympathetic and indulgent toward the weaknesses and even the wickednesses of others. And this course, no matter whether natural, or affected for policy's sake, is very pleasing to the weak and the wicked. But the world intuitively recognizes the secret motives of moral action, whether it can clearly define, or fully analyze them or not.

When christian people tolerate any kind of conduct in others unrebuked, they are virtually declaring to the world that they approve of such conduct, and that they think that Christ approves of it. So in general the world believes that what a Church tolerates in practice, as well as preaches in word, represents Jesus Christ to the world, or at least their conception of Him. How important is it then, for every follower of Christ to be like Him. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."—II Tim. 2:19. Worldlings often point to what the Church tolerates in its members as an excuse for not accept-

ing its obligations and privileges. And many leave its fold on account of the wickedness and injustice practiced and tolerated within her borders. The writer has often heard members of another denomination declare that they would leave their Church if their law-making body revoked their rule against questionable amusements. Politic toleration of evil benumbs the faith, chills the ardor, clips and curbs the courage of christian workers, so that they cannot work hopefully or successfully. So that necessary Church discipline rids the Church of reproach, and an incubus of unhallowed influence which cripples the cause of Christ.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Obligations to Forgiveness.

AS CHRISTIAN reproof is principally for the purpose of bringing men to repentance, the proper spirit for one who reproves is the forgiving spirit. The purpose of repentance is to bring men to a sense of their relation and obligation to God, a moral condition which will merit forgiveness. Reproof proper is a call for sinners to return to God, to seek repentance toward God, and forgiveness from God. So reproof is not christian unless its final object is the restoration of right relations of men toward God and toward their fellowmen, a relation in which God can justly honor the propitiation made by Jesus Christ for the sins of the world, and forgive the penitent.

Neither are men in a right spirit to reprove others unless their object is to bring men to repentance, so that God can forgive and save them. They must also be in a mood to forgive the past conduct of penitent sinners, and give them a chance for the future, just as God does. As was said before, reproof may sometimes be for the protection of others, and to ward off reproach from the Church and cause of Christ. But the principal object of reproof is to turn men from their sins, and to inculcate in them a desire for righteousness, which means "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Acts 20:21. When

reproof is administered in any other manner or spirit or for any other purpose, it not only fails to accomplish any spiritual end, but it is likely to accomplish an evil one. Reproof in any manner or spirit may anger a man, but when performed in wrong spirit it nearly always does so, and confirms him in sin and impenitence. But when christian reproof is given to any reasonable man in the proper manner and spirit, it will rarely fail to accomplish some good. The Bible very plainly declares the susceptibility of the wise to christian reproof. The wise man himself said, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee."—Prov. 9:8. It may not always have the desired effect at first, but it will afterward. "He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favor than he that flattereth with his tongue."—Prov. 28:23.

When God demands anything of us, He not only has a reason, but a good one therefor. So He has in this case. There are several reasons expressed or implied why erring men should be forgiven when they repent. Such an important duty as is this would naturally be enforced by numerous Scriptural declarations, of which there are quite a number.

I. The first reason for forgiveness on the part of men who are offended is to show to others that their opposition to sin is not due to malice, but to love and an unselfish interest in another's welfare. So many neglect, and some even refuse to reprove sin until they themselves become angry or malicious, that usually the reproved, and often even others, are inclined to think that the only motive for personal reproof is to give vent to personal spite. Too often this is true.

But when it is so, the animus of the reproof is very plain from several important and very evident facts. The first, as has already been suggested, is their neglect or refusal to reprove till their own personal hostility is excited. The second evidence is the manner and spirit which characterizes the rebuke. In such case the reproof will be administered as if it were to punish instead of to reform, to hinder instead of to help, to damn and to down instead of to save from sin. The third evidence is that when reproof is prompted by malignant emotions, forgiveness is refused even when explanation or repentance of the offensive conduct is both clear and complete. Such course and attitude show that the offended hopes that the alleged offense is a fact, and that the sinner will continue in his sins. Occasionally people are found who are so malicious that they wish that the objects of their wrath and malice were not only sinful, but so evidently sinful, that they would have just cause to abuse and condemn them.

Those who refuse or neglect to reprove till their own malignant emotions are aroused, will pour all the vials of their wrath upon the objects of their malice when they are stirred. This is really not christian reproof, but sinful abuse. This very prevalent custom leads those who are reproved to suspect or doubt the sincerity of those who reprove them. Personal abuse always comes from malice; christian reproof always springs from love. For this very reason, one who reproves should never neglect to manifest the spirit of love, kindness and forbearance. The purpose of reproof is to help; the object of abuse is to hinder. The

real object of christian reproof is to put an offender above the reach of future criticism; the mere accuser and abuser does not care whether the object of his malice is ever any better or not. In fact, he would rather an offender would become worse instead of better. Some such has been heard to express his purpose to say or do something to excite the object of his wrath to say or do reprehensible things. Such a foe professes to abuse because the other is bad; but secretly wishes he were worse instead of better. It is not because the other fellow is bad that he pours out the vials of his wrath upon him; but because he himself is mad. The christian reproves because he loves; the sinner abuses because he hates. The christian desires to help the other fellow up; the sinner wishes to kick him down. The christian yearns to exalt Christ; the sinner wishes to exalt himself. The christian is anxious to eradicate sin out of the world and its people; the sinner desires to rid the world of the victim of his malice, no matter whether he be saint or sinner, right or wrong.

II. Then again, forgiveness is a part of justice from man to man. Justice requires a man to forgive an offender when he repents, for the reason that unforgivingness is a kind of punishment inflicted upon an offender for his transgressions. So unforgivingness should cease when wrong-doing, its cause, ceases. To continue to hold a grudge against an offender after he repents of his wrongs is on par with holding ill-will against man when he has done nothing. It is unjust and dishonest to attribute to a man something of which he has never been guilty. It is also dishonest and un-

just to continue to attribute to a man what he has ceased to practice, or an act which he has really performed, but which he has also afterward repented of, and repudiated and repaired as far as possible. The purpose is the sin, and the sin ceases when the purpose ceases, and the sinner is penitent. God always ceases to punish, in part at least, the man who forsakes his sin. The principal object of punishment here in this world is to reform men from committing sin, and when the sin ceases, the principal object of the punishment ceases.

There are three prominent purposes of punishment here in this world. The first and principal purpose is to discourage or to prevent men from committing sin if possible. This is also the first great purpose of all punishment in well-ordered governments, no matter whether it succeeds in reforming men or not. The second purpose of punishment is to prevent men from returning to the sins which they have forsaken. It is usually more difficult to win men from their sins than it is to prevent their return to the sins which they have forsaken. For that reason, the more severe punishments are administered to those who still continue to practice their sins. The third object of punishment is to warn others not to follow the evil example of those who are in sin. This is part of the object of christian reproof. "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear."—I Tim. 5:20. But while all the punishment here in this world is more or less reformatory, in the next it is purely punitive. Now reproof is more or less of the nature of punishment. But as a punishment it is almost wholly reformatory, or preventative, as in the case above cited. But see-

ing that it is mostly if not wholly reformatory or preventative, care should be taken that it is so administered that it may truly accomplish the end for which it is designed.

Again, needless pain should not be inflicted on anybody. Persistent unforgivingness toward genuinely penitent persons does no good, unless perchance it acts as a deterrent against the repetition of wrong. This it may do. But if unforgivingness is continued very long, it may have an effect just the opposite, and drive the penitent back into sin again. The persistent withholding of forgiveness from one who has repented of his sins may finally cause the penitent to return to his sins on the ground that people treat him just as bad when he tries to do right as when he does wrong. Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church to receive the offender against the order of the Church, and "forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."—II Cor. 2:6-8. He said further that his punishment inflicted of many was sufficient; thus intimating that any more would be unjust. Cf. also I Cor. 5:4-13. This same rule properly applied to christian reproof would require it to be sufficient if possible to accomplish the offender's reform; and would indicate that any more than that would be unjust.

Moreover, genuine repentance is the struggle of a weak or wicked soul against the powers of evil, when the soul single-handed is insufficient to cope with all the supernatural forces of evil, and needs all the help human and divine that is available. It is a serious matter to any soul to crush its maiden efforts at self-

recovery. It may not only weaken or destroy its efforts, but it may seriously wound the soul, crush the heart, break the will, and overthrow its purpose for righteousness. At no time in life does neglect or opposition, insult or unkindness, stab the heart as deeply as now. For it is just now newly opened and tender; it expects help, and receives hindrance; asks bread, and gets a stone; craves sympathy and gets snubs. Nothing is so encouraging to a sincere penitent as is hearty forgiveness at the crucial moment; and nothing is more discouraging as for repentance to be met with a cold or bitter or an unforgiving spirit.

III. This suggests the third point. The moral influence of merited forgiveness freely bestowed is very great. Christian forgiveness bestowed with cordiality and dignity is a strong incentive to love and righteousness. Many an anxious person has hesitated and even refused to repent, simply because he feared that his repentance would not meet with due forgiveness. Some seem to think also that genuine repentance on their part would only give their enemies a better opportunity to inflict malice upon them. Indeed causes are not infrequent where people appear to feel that their own repentance and confession would deprive them of needed protection against unjust and unforgiving people. Paul wrote to the Romans that it was God's goodness and kindness which led them to repentance.—Rom. 2:4. The manifestation of the same qualities on the part of man would no doubt have the same effect as would their manifestation by God Himself. We are sure also that the discreet exhibition of the benevolent graces and feelings by men

would intensify penitence where it already existed, as well as, and as easy as, produce it where it did not exist. Most observant people have seen it done, even where they have not been expecting it. Forgiveness freely and fully bestowed always excites a benevolent feeling in the heart of the recipient, and also in the heart of the observer of it. It also generates and develops manliness and Christlikeness in the soul of the one who bestows it. This of itself indicates that it is right. For no moral act whose reflex influence is so wholesome can possibly be evil, but must be good. Otherwise the constitution of the moral universe is so much at fault that a wrong act can have a good reflex influence. But such a supposition is absurd.

On the other hand, either punishment or the fear of it may affect the outward conduct without affecting the heart and soul. It not only may, but often does, for it has been frequently observed. Christ Himself preached the law, and the terrible retribution that follows its infraction, in order to bring men to repentance, and succeeded. But while He closed His ministry in warning the scribes and Pharisees of the eight terrible woes which He pronounced upon hypocrisy and respectable sin, He began it by promulgating the eight beautiful beatitudes for the righteous. And while there are seven parables of judgment in the gospels, there are eight parables of grace. This shows that more emphasis is placed upon the benevolent side of the gospel than upon the malevolent side. Moreover goodness, forbearance and longsuffering are likely to affect the heart first, and the conduct afterward. But the outward life is sure sooner or

later to adjust itself in accordance with the moral and affectional condition of the heart. The Bible repeatedly emphasizes this fact. In fact, it repeatedly states that it is impossible for the outward life to continue wrong while the heart is right. Whereas under fear the outward conduct may be changed, without having any definite or permanent moral influence on the heart. The spirit of our conduct has a greater influence for good or evil than has the conduct itself. And as forgiveness is a manifestation of the spirit of a man, it has a great influence on all parties concerned, because it is a manifestation of the inner life and disposition of the man. Nothing manifests the inner life of a man more than does forgiveness. So forgiveness seems to many to indicate the sincerity of the man. And as it begets benevolence in general, so it produces love between men.

The Scriptures require us to "provoke one another to love and to good works."—Heb. 10:24. While the temporary withholding of forgiveness from sincere repentance may serve to fortify the penitent against returning to evil because of the dread of the repetition of such punishment, such a course will not provoke him to love, but more probably to bitterness and stubbornness, even while it serves as an incentive to righteousness. Withholding of forgiveness may breed hypocrisy, too, by causing the offender to pretend to be penitent so as to avoid such punishment. Moreover, such unforgiveness after repentance is sincere and complete, is not for the purpose of restoring the sinner to righteousness, but either to punish him, or to gratify the malicious feelings of the unforgiving

one. For by supposition, the sinner is already thoroughly penitent, and is righteous in purpose and attitude already. In this case the offended becomes the offender. For when a man thoroughly repents he is righteous in purpose, spirit and attitude already. And when the offended refuses to forgive such a penitent offender, he is virtually saying by such conduct that he does not want God Himself to forgive such a one, and that he does not want such a one to be saved, no matter whether he repents or not. Unforgiving people also have a secret hope that God will not forgive a man whom they refuse to forgive. Such people are enemies both to God and to righteousness, as well as to the persons whom they hate.

Scripture principles require men not to quench in a penitent sinner any sincere desires to repent, but rather to encourage them. From above quoted passages, it is seen that a disposition on the part of the offended to forgive a penitent leads him to repentance. When Paul wrote to the Romans chiding them for their hard-heartedness, he said, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"—Rom. 2:4. The Psalmist expressed the same sentiment when he said, "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared," or obeyed, for that is the meaning of fear in this passage —Ps. 130:4. This shows that God hopes to win men to loyalty and obedience to Himself by holding out to them the hope of forgiveness, not by refusing it. Isaiah lends his support to the same teaching. He declares that encouragement and forgiveness (for for-

giveness is implied in strengthening and confirming weak souls in their righteous purposes) will lead the blind to open their eyes and the deaf to unstop their ears.—Isa. 35: 3-5. God wants to give every man a chance to be saved, and desires his people to do the same thing. Christ urged the people of Jerusalem to repent so that He might forgive and save them; but they would not. So earnest and anxious was He that He preached and prayed and wept that they might repent, and yet they refused.—Mat. 23: 37-39. Indeed, He not only wept bitterly, but he seemed, yea, He was heart-broken because they did not repent. He was just as anxious to forgive them as He was to have them to repent. For God always forgives a man when his repentance is both clear and complete. There are positively no exceptions to this rule in the Scriptures. For repentance forced from fear of punishment is really no repentance at all. And God wants His people to follow the same course toward the penitent that He does.

IV. The Golden Rule is applicable here as well as elsewhere. Men must "do unto others as they would have others to do unto them" in forgiveness as in other things. Paul taught the two great principles of forgiveness and helpfulness, and gave the reasons for his advice, when he wrote to the Galatians, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—Gal. 6: 1. If men have sinned, and yet have repented, they want both their Creator and their fellowmen to forgive them. If so, they must treat others likewise. The same spirit must also mold and temper all their

reproofs. Their reproofs must be given in such a spirit and manner as would lead others to repentance and faith. Men inspire faith in God when they inspire faith in themselves as christians. If sinners see that professing christians are unforgiving and revengeful, they are likely to think that God is unforgiving and revengeful also. When christians quickly and readily forgive those who repent, penitents are easily led to believe that the God of these same christians will readily and freely forgive also.

In order to accomplish this result, reproof must be prompted by a forgiving spirit, and manifest it, too. Reproof prompted by an unforgiving spirit will rarely if ever inspire a spirit of repentance in the reproved, but more likely rebellion and stubbornness. Such reproof is not likely to be reproof at all, but malicious abuse. When the object of reproof sees that the reprover desires the highest good of the penitent, and that he is kindly and faithfully working to that end, personal admonition will as a rule not only be taken kindly, but the offender is more likely to turn to God and to righteousness. When men remember the pit from which they have been digged, and their liability to fall therein again, their reproofs will more probably be tempered with kindness and mercy. Men excite in others the emotions they feel in their own souls. If they manifest kindness, they will inspire kindness; if they manifest an unforgiving spirit, they will arouse an unforgiving spirit; if they are merciful and kind, others will be also. So we must be what we desire others to be. This is the tallest kind of preaching. Men will listen to a good wholesome example far

quicker than they will a multitude of pious platitudes and empty argument. Men must not only be what they seem, they must also be what they preach. Most people are convinced by conduct far easier than they are by assumed eloquence.

V. There are several Scriptural reasons why men should forgive everyone who repents. The plain commands to forgive are re-enforced by frequent repetition. Its importance and also its neglect demanded reiteration. Immediately following the first statement of forgiveness in the Lord's prayer, Christ repeats the necessity of forgiving all men that the offerer of the petition may receive an answer to his own petitions. The reason assigned is very clear and emphatic and positive. "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."—Mat. 6:14f. The reason here given is that God will treat us just like we treat our fellowmen. If we forgive, so will He. If we do not forgive, neither will He. If we forgive partially or reluctantly, He will do likewise. If we forgive cordially and freely, He will abundantly pardon also.—Isa. 55:7. If we refuse to forgive a penitent, He will refuse to forgive us too. If we forgive men when they repent, God says He forgives us as we forgive our fellowmen. And praying in His name for forgiveness, we are asking Him to treat us just like we treat our fellowmen; just as good, and just as bad; just as merciful and kind, and just as reluctant and reserved.

In Mark 11:25, it is written, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also may forgive you your trespasses."

Here forgiveness on the part of man is represented as a necessary preparation on the part of that man to recieve the divine forgiveness. It is a necessary prerequisite, a sine qua non, for us to forgive our fellowman, if we ever expect to receive any forgiveness from God.

Paul assigns another reason. He cites the transcendant example of Christ for us to follow.—Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13. In the latter passage he exhorts men to "forgive one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." In the other passage the Ephesians are exhorted to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Paul exhorts his converts to be as kind and forgiving to one another as God the Father and Christ the Son have been forgiving to them. The implication is, that if they do not, they are not like either God or His Son Jesus Christ. Another thing implied in the verses preceding those quoted is, that forgiveness is necessary to keep bitterness out of their hearts, and also to cultivate the kind, gentle and tender qualities of Jesus Christ, and be Christlike.

Then again, forgiveness is taught by the fact that God severely punishes those who refuse to forgive. In the parable of the unmerciful servant, the servant who was unmerciful, and who had already received free and full forgiveness, had his own forgiveness revoked when he refused to forgive his own brother when he repented and asked forgiveness. If this parable means anything it means that if christians should backslide so far as to refuse to forgive their fellowmen, God would revoke all His former forgiveness to them.

CHAPTER XVII.

Necessary Conditions for Forgiveness.

AS MANY persons have run into erroneous notions in regard to christian reproof, so have they run into foolish and unwarranted notions regarding christian forgiveness. It is passing strange that some will teach that men must forgive one another on different conditions from those on which God forgives them—or rather on no conditions at all. Nearly all christians of all denominations will contend that God will not forgive any man unless and until he repents and believes. So far he is orthodox and Scriptural. But should the same persons be asked on what grounds must men forgive one another, many of them will declare upon none at all. Should the average christian man be asked if God ever forgives an impenitent sinner, he will very emphatically say, "Never." Yet many such persons will insist that men must forgive one another upon no condition at all, and immediately. In fact, many persons declare that men must forgive those who sin against them knowingly and intentionally, no matter whether they cease from their sins, right their wrongs, apologize or confess or not. They never seem to see any inconsistency between their insistence that God will never forgive a man till he repents and also believes, and at the same time insisting that men must always do what they declare God will never do under any circum-

stances, that is, forgive a man before he repents and believes. Nearly every minister and layman, christian and sinner, the scholar and illiterate person will assert that God will never forgive anyone except on repentance and faith. Yet on the other hand many will contend that everybody, everywhere and under all circumstances, must forgive all offenders whether they repent, confess or believe or not.

It is usually very noticeable that such people do not practice what they preach. It has been observed that the same people who insist most strongly upon this doctrine of forgiveness without repentance will hold grudges for years against those who have offended them, and sometimes when there is no reasonable grounds for offense. Furthermore, they will be most bitter and unrelenting toward some one who has wronged them, or offended them, but who has also repented, confessed, and made reparation as far as possible. It is very noticeable that the people who always emphasize mercy at the expense of justice, and love at the expense of righteousness, will not manifest either love or righteousness or mercy when they are offended.

But there are several arguments from both reason and revelation why one should not forgive an intelligent offender till he repents. Nothing can be morally right which cannot be supported by both reason and revelation. There are several reasons why men should not forgive the impenitent. They are divided into three general classes. They are because of the effect of such forgiveness upon the offender himself; because of its effect upon the moral sense of the one

who forgives; and because of its effect upon the standing of God before the world.

I. Forgiving an impenitent sinner accomplishes no good end, but may and often does an evil one. There is nothing in such forgiveness to inspire or encourage an impenitent sinner to lead a better life, or to cause him to have a higher regard for truth and righteousness, for God or man, for the law or the gospel. In fact, it would lower them all in his estimation. Why should a man make any effort for reformation or improvement if he can have the same standing, respect, confidence and treatment without doing better. For sinners are looking for the advantages of different kinds of conduct. There is no inspiration in forgiveness to any man unless such a man desires to do better. Forgiveness can never inspire a man to moral effort who has no moral aspirations. Forgiveness in such case only smooths the way for a sinner to continue in evil doing. Moral conduct and association should be such as to encourage and pave the way for the good, and to hinder and discourage the bad.

1. Forgiveness without repentance does not have a good effect in Church life. Forgiving an impenitent sinner is on par with the system of Catholic indulgences, according to which priests forgive all kinds of unrepented sin upon the payment of so much money. On the other hand they absolutely refuse to forgive unless they are paid so much money, no matter whether the sin is confessed, the wrong is righted, or the sinner is perfectly penitent or not. Doing penance and paying indulgence with them takes the place of

genuine repentance, which absolutely demands the complete cessation from all sin, and the reparation of all wrong as far as possible. This system of indulgences only encourages the votaries of Catholicism in sin. Here we see the general effects of forgiveness without repentance in another form. Instead of preventing or hindering or discouraging sinning, it really encourages it. For the Catholic laity are perfectly willing to pay large indulgences to the priesthood for the unrestricted privilege of committing sin. Just as many a drunkard would rather pay large and repeated fines, and serve long and numerous jail sentences, than to quit his cups, save his fines and enjoy his liberty. Paying fines, serving time, or doing penance does not in the least deter the activity of strong criminal instincts. Many a criminal has coolly made all preparations to pay his fine, and serve his sentence before committing his crime. Neither fine nor imprisonment is any deterrent to such characters.

The system of indulgences never won anybody to reformation of heart and life. Neither does Protestant forgiveness without repentance accomplish any more than does Catholic forgiveness without repentance. Yet some Protestants will bitterly condemn Catholic indulgences and at the same time strenuously insist upon the Protestant system of indulgences. But is one system very much better than the other? If there is any difference it seems to be in favor of the Catholic system. For in some ways the Catholic system seems to accomplish more than does the Protestant system of indulgences. The Catholics, by requiring their delinquents to make a confession, do penance,

or pay a sort of forfeit for each offense, teach them that every sin must be accounted for in some way sooner or later. Catholicism requires a strict recognition and confession of every sin, while the Protestant system of indulgences totally ignores all of a man's sins, so far as the personal relations of the offender and the offended is concerned. And this teaches the sinner to do the same thing as to his own sins. For this reason it is easier to get a man who has been brought up in the Catholic faith, and is really penitent to seek and accept salvation than it is a person who has been brought up in the Protestant faith. The Protestant will so often try to dodge the issue of real repentance, confession and reparation, and then seek to accept forgiveness by faith. But the Catholic who has been taught that every sin must be confessed and accounted for, will soon confess and itemize his various moral deficiencies and transgressions, and after he has reached the end of his conscious transgressions, he will recognize that nothing further is required except to receive forgiveness. The Protestant will so often dodge the real issue, will generalize, and pray in an indefinite way for God to pardon his many sins while yet refusing to confess or make due reparation for any of them. Indeed when sometimes making a general confession of "his many sins as numerous as the sands of the sea and as the stars or as the hairs of his head," he will indignantly deny any specifications as to this or that sin, no matter how glaring or evident it may be. These statements are not suppositions. For every earnest evangelist knows that one of the most difficult things he has to do is get even

apparently earnest seekers to acknowledge that they ever did any particular wrong. They have been taught to forgive each other without repentance, and even that God will in some instances forgive simply on faith, that even now they hope to receive forgiveness from God without full repentance. As God does not and will not forgive the intelligently impenitent, such seeking souls soon get to that place where it is evident to themselves and to everybody else that they are making no progress in their quest for salvation. On the other hand, Catholics come to the altar, and having been taught that all sin must be recognized, confessed and atoned for in some way, they confess their sins, and are ready to make reparation as they were ready formerly to do penance. In that state it is usually very easy to lead them to accept Christ as their atonement and Savior. So they accept pardon and salvation through Him. They quickly grasp the essentials of salvation by faith. So it rarely takes long to get a penitent Catholic through to victory.

There is, however, one exception to the above principle, but it is only a seeming exception. This is the case where a man does not repent because he fears he will not be forgiven, nor have a fair chance if he should repent. In such a case, free and full forgiveness will often bring such a man to active repentance. This has frequently occurred. But the philosophy of it is not so pertinent to the case as it seems. For such a man has really had the spirit of repentance before; but possibly did not manifest it for fear the unforgiving would take advantage of his concessions and penitence. So forgiveness bestowed up-

on him did not really bring him to repentance, but simply opened up the way for its manifestation.

Priestly absolution and indulgence are responsible for much of the sin and corruption in the Catholic Church. For there was a decline in conscientious righteous living as soon as the system of indulgences was introduced. Furthermore, there will never be any substantial reformation or revival of righteousness in that Church till the system is completely and permanently banished. For the system of indulgences will never accomplish any good moral purpose anywhere, at any time, or in any Church. It is not taught by the word of God nor by reason. And it will not stand the test of logic or of life either.

2. Forgiveness without repentance will not succeed in the home any more than it does in the Church. It nearly always shows itself to be a failure in the home. Forgiving a sinner before he repents only confirms a sinner in his sins. This is very clearly seen in the case of indulgent parents who never punish nor reprove their children for any misconduct whatever, no matter how bad it may be, or how impenitent or determined their children may be. Such children rarely fail to be spoiled. Never punishing nor reproving nor calling to account in any way is a plain, practical application of the principle of forgiving without requiring due repentance. This principle applied in the home has the same effect that it has in the Church, and it has the same effect upon children that it has upon adults. It always spoils them. The principles of moral conduct are the same in heaven or earth or hell, so far as their moral effect is concerned. And

it does not matter by whom it is applied by indulgent parents, Catholic priests, God in heaven, or by christian men upon earth; and no matter whether upon children or adults, sinners or criminals, in the Church or out. Neither does it matter what the motive may be. It may be for mere tender-heartedness, or it may be for a moral effect, or it may be for the sake of mere policy. But its effect is never for good, but it is usually for evil.

One form of this parental indulgence is seen in laughing at children's wrongs, and repeating them or referring to them as cute or smart, for the amusement or admiration of thoughtless friends. For only the thoughtless will approve of such mistakes. When children see that their little petty wrongs are repeated for admiration or amusement, they are sure to repeat them on all conspicuous occasions. And all thoughtful people know that there is no surer or quicker way to spoil a child. Either ignoring or repeating blameworthy faults for approval or admiration is a kind of forgiveness of such wrongs which fortifies the actors against repentance, by forgiving them before they repent, or without requiring them to repent. D. L. Moody used to say that David spoiled Absalom by always forgiving him without requiring him to repent.

Another sad fact about this is, that parental indulgence here is responsible for so much of the lawlessness of the present day. Children are not made amenable to law at home, and are made to believe that is not necessary to be subject to law anywhere else. Children who are raised to be obedient at home rarely become lawless away from home. And children who

are allowed to be disrespectful to proper authority at home will snap their fingers at the law of the State or School or Church.

3. The futility of forgiveness without repentance as a method of reform is even more patent to all observers when it is practiced in civil affairs. It will not work in the State any better than it does in the Church or home. Forgiving an impenitent sinner, and ignoring all his faults and vices, does no good to him, neither to those who observe it. Leaving numerous and heinous sins unrebuked does not reform the one guilty of them, but is also very liable to encourage others to commit the same sins. Therefore Paul exhorted Timothy to rebuke sin in public places. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." I Tim. 5:20. Calling transgressors to account, prevents others from following their evil example. The Old Testament required heinous offenders to be stoned by the whole congregation to discourage others. There are two ways in which the forgiveness of impenitent sinners is applied in public life: by acquitting criminals, and by electing crooked and undeserving men to office.

The forgiveness of criminals is manifest in several ways. Just after the writer graduated from college he supplied a Church in the most wicked community he ever saw. Sometimes malicious murderers were not even pursued out of town. In many instances no effort at all was made to bring criminal offenders to justice. Crime held high carnival, and was frequent and of the worst sort. Neither life nor property was safe. Numerous places in the town and surrounding

community were pointed out where men were robbed or mobbed, slugged or killed. The criminally inclined dared to do almost anything, for they were rarely brought to justice. This is always the case where crime is not arrested nor punished nor even rebuked. The fact is that mere rebuke or publicity is too tame for the restraint of the natural criminal. As he is usually given to violence nothing less or different from violence appeals to him. The maudlin measures of puerile pardon and sickly sentimentality do not move the reckless rushing criminals from their impetuous course. For this reason also, the community very often neglects to punish a crime for fear of suffering a greater crime against the persons or property in it. But the neglect to punish crime is the same as forgiving crime so far as its moral effects are concerned.

This unreasoning forgiveness is sometimes exercised not by the citizenship at large, but by the very officials whose duty it is to mete out justice to all transgressors of the civil law. It does not matter how it is done, whether by packing the jury box with biased jurors, or by bribing them after they have been indiscriminately chosen, by the false testimony of bribed or prejudiced witnesses, or by the setting aside of the verdict by the judge, or by the appeal to a higher court, and being by it reversed, suspended, or remanded for a new trial. But no matter what the cause of the perversion of the justice is, the moral effect is always and everywhere the same. This decision is not modern by any manner of means. The wise man of ancient days recognized it and expressed it nearly three thousand years ago. "Because sentence

against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."—Eccl. 8:11. This phraseology may express suspension only, or the temporary forgiveness of transgression, but the moral effect upon mankind is just the same. It emboldens the criminally inclined. If the temporary suspension of the penalties of transgression encourages men to commit sin; how much more will the knowledge of its permanent suspension encourage them in sin and crime.

Then again, if penalty prevents or discourages crime, there are two facts which would if pressed home upon the convictions of the people, prevent or discourage transgression of the law. These two facts are the certainty and severity of the penalty. The lessening of either one of these would tend to lighten its influence upon mankind. Mere doubt as to the infliction of any punishment often encourages men in sin and wrong. Men will take a risk if they think that punishment is not at all certain. Then sometimes punishment is so light that it has no deterrent effect upon men. The heavier the penalties are, the more they deter from the commission of crime. Men in judicial positions recognize this, and make the laws so as to require longer sentences and heavier fines for each succeeding crime, so as to have the desired effect. Its effect is shown by the fact that there are more light fines and short terms than there are of the severer ones.

There is still another way in which this principle is manifest in political life. Promoting the wicked to political position is a species of forgiveness to the impenitent wicked. And promoting the wicked also pro-

motes wickedness. The recognition of this evil effect is not new. The Psalmist observed it centuries ago, and said, "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted."—Ps. 12:8. Promoting the wicked in politics has two very bad effects. In the first place, it confirms in sin the sinner who is elected, and especially if he is elected simply because he is wicked, as is sometimes the case. This only encourages such a one to be more wicked still. But occasionally the exaltation of evil men by a wicked or thoughtless populace arouses the indignant determination of the righteous to overthrow the reign of the wicked as well as the reign of wickedness. The triumph of the wicked sometimes arouses the righteous to a greater determination not to let wickedness prevail. But the effect upon the wicked is usually the opposite. Unconditional forgiveness not only tends to confirm the wicked and impenitent in their sins, but it also encourages others to go and do likewise. The wicked and criminal classes always rejoice when a wicked man is elected to office, or when a man who is considered respectable and law-abiding himself, but who is also known to be lenient toward criminals, is elected to office.

II. The moral effect upon the man who forgives unconditionally is very marked also, though he may not be conscious of it. So there are some good reasons against unconditional forgiveness from the standpoint of preserving one's own moral integrity and spiritual vision. A person is always under obligation to follow such a course as will be conducive to his own moral integrity and improvement. A man's moral destiny is in his own hands. His first duty is toward his own

moral self-preservation. And it is not reasonable to suppose that God would require anything of his creatures which would be detrimental to their own moral well-being. In conserving their moral interests they will not be able to do anything hurtful to their own moral well-being, and while they are treating their fellowmen right they will not be able to do anything that will hinder their own welfare.

1. One of the first things that is required of men is that they preserve their own sense of justice. And the first thing that justice requires of men is to give to both friend and foe, to both good and evil, their exact dues as far as possible. Genuine justice will not permit men to treat both good and evil alike. God makes a difference, and wants His people to make a difference. The command that Moses gave to his judges in cases of controversy is pertinent and applicable to all people and to all cases. "Then shall they justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked."—Deu. 25:1. That is not all. Christians make a difference between people of different characters whether it is a civil case or not. To do so was a positive requirement of those who were to stand in His holy presence. The Psalmist asks the question, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" Among other conditions named is this one. It is one "in whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord."—Ps. 15:1, 4. When a man has the nature of God, he will do as God does, and as God wants him to do. And one of the things that God wants a man to do, and does Himself, is to make a difference between right and wrong.

2. Another reason why persons should not forgive an offender till he repents is, that they may preserve their own distinction between right and wrong. Forgiveness of a repented wrong is a recognition and appreciation of true penitence. If people treat the impenitent just as they treat the penitent, there is no righteous recognition of real repentance. God pronounces a "woe upon those who call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."—Isa. 5:20. Men cannot preserve their own distinction between right and wrong, unless they also preserve their distinction between penitence and impenitence. For one is right and the other is wrong. If the same treatment is accorded the right and wrong, and the penitent and the impenitent, it will confuse one's distinction between right and wrong. One cannot take the same attitude toward both, and yet continue to consider them very different. It is just as the Poet has said:

> "Vice is a monster of such frightful mien,
> That to be hated needs but to be seen;
> But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

Then taking a kind attitude toward evil, or even a tolerant one, will cause the one who does so to love evil. If we take an intolerant attitude toward evil, we will finally become so that we cannot tolerate evil. So while God continually insists on men having the spirit of forgiveness toward the erring, He is both wise and good in requiring them to reprove the erring, and then

to forgive the penitent. Any other course would confuse their moral distinctions. The divine plan of reproving the sinner, and then forgiving the penitent, will not only preserve the distinction between right and wrong, but will often sharpen it as well. Moreover the clearness of men's moral distinctions can be preserved only by maintaining these distinctions. The neglect of such distinctions is considered very reprehensible. Christ reproved some of the Pharisees because they were unable to perceive the moral bearings of some of the questions of His day.—Mat. 16:1-12.

3. Related to this is another question very similar. The Bible requires men to rebuke sin, not condone it. Our first duty toward all unrepented sin is to rebuke it. —Lev. 19:17; Luke 17:3f. The commands to do so are repeated in various forms and places. And in the very nature of the case, men cannot forgive sin, and at the same time rebuke it. For these commands are diametrically opposed to each other. Then all the divine commands express both the will and the wisdom of God, in regard to the thing commanded. And refusing to obey such commands, is, in the very nature of things, rejecting the will, and challenging the wisdom of God.

4. Forgiving an impenitent sinner is in a sense compromising with evil. Right and justice require that one oppose wrong in order to keep from compromising with it. Neglecting to oppose evil confirms men in their sins, and forgiving men who are impenitent tends to confirm them in their impenitence. Repentance is turning from the wrong to the right. And forgiving the penitent is encouraging men's ef-

forts to cease from sin, and to do right. Forgiving unrepented evil is compromising with such evil, and often injures those who are trying to do right. Pilate condoned the malicious accusers of Christ, and in a measure forgave them. He could not have consistently rebuked them without releasing Christ. In fact the most effective reproof he could have administered to them would have been to have arrested them and to have released Christ, especially after he had adjudged Christ innocent. In like manner also, Felix, Festus and Agrippa must have released Paul from his unjust bonds. All of them acknowledged his innocence, yet all of them catered to his malicious accusers, and so far forgave them. Had they have been absolutely just, they must necessarily have acquitted Paul of what they acknowledged as unjust accusations; and on the other hand, they should have not only reproved his malicious accusers, but have arrested and imprisoned them. For the Old Mosaic law required all of those who were unjust in their attempts to prosecute the innocent to suffer just what they wanted the innocent to suffer.—Deu. 19:15-21.

In forgiving a person who is in the wrong, one nearly always injures those who are right. In each of the above mentioned cases, the judges forgave and ignored the wrong done to an innocent party. In fact, forgiving an offender who is still impenitent, is in reality siding with the person who is in the wrong, instead of with the innocent or righteous. So then forgiving an impenitent sinner is in reality compromising with wrong. Therefore a christian must not only refuse to forgive an impenitent person; but he

must also rebuke him to keep from compromising with evil.

5. Then again, forgiving unrepented wrong is becoming partaker of such wrong, and of the sins which are forgiven or are condoned. When Pilate surrendered Christ to the bloodthirsty Jews, after he had declared, "I find no fault in this man," Luke 23:4, he became a partaker of their sins and crime. Washing his hands in token of innocency did not make him innocent. It was his duty to protect the innocent and punish the guilty here as much as anywhere else. He had declared that Christ was innocent.—Mat. 27:11-26. When Felix recognized that Paul was innocent, he should have released him, and without delay. When Festus declared that "he had committed nothing worthy of death," Acts 25:25, it was wrong even to delay his release. When both Festus and Agrippa announced that "this man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds," they should have acted accordingly and immediately. In neglecting to do so, they were forgiving and condoning the unjust and malicious conduct of his accusers, and became partakers with them of their wickedness. Overlooking, upholding or forgiving sins which are unrepented, is becoming partakers of all such sins.

III. God does not want us to injure His standing, nor attack His moral administration of the world's affairs. This principle forbids us to exonerate those whom he condemns. Loyalty to our Moral Governor requires us to support Him in His administration. That means to abide by His laws, support His officers, sanction His plans, favor His friends, and refuse to

give protection or comfort to His enemies. The subject of obedience to law. and respect and submission to all law-abiding authority is taught throughout the whole Bible. The same principle applied to the divine government, which cannot err, requires us to be faithful and loyal to it.

1. The first and one of the most important reasons why one should not forgive an impenitent offender is that God does not forgive the impenitent. In no place do we find the slightest intimation that God ever forgives any man until he repents. The Lord's prayer does not teach otherwise. So many say, "We must forgive or God will not forgive us." Christians are taught to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." But many never seem to think what all this implies. This does not mean that men are to set an example to God, and to swing Him into line with them, and to persuade Him if possible to be as good and kind to erring men as they are; but it is to swing men into line with God. And this is to show that men have repented, and have fallen into line with God.

Who would think a judge or juror sane, that would say when trying a clear case of criminality, "Now brethren, God teaches us to forgive men under all circumstances, and so let us obey Him implicitly in this case, and turn these criminals loose. Let us not prosecute them, but just pray for them." No sane law-abiding citizen thinks that either judge or juror ought to do any such thing. No matter if the criminal professes to repent, clear acquittal would not be wise, for usually forced repentance is considered insincere. In

fact, most people think that repentance on the dying bed is insincere, and that is more serious than indictment in court. Furthermore, a person who is truly penitent is willing to take all that he deserves in the way of retribution for wrong, although he may not be unwilling to take more than he deserves. Indeed a willingness to receive one's just deserts is a part of repentance.

Now if a man forgives those who wrong him before they repent, and then prays in the words of the Lord's prayer, he is simply asking God to forgive him before he repents. But no evangelical christian believes that God will do that. Yet he is asking God to do that very thing if he thus prays, and if he forgives the impenitent. But if men will not forgive the impenitent, but will always forgive the penitent, and then ask God to forgive them as they forgive, then they are asking God to do what it is certain that He will do, and has promised to do. Men must always pray in the will of God. But they cannot pray in the will of God unless they forgive on the same terms as those on which they know that God forgives. It must be offensive to God for such men to continually pray to Him contrary to His own revealed will. In such case they have no clear assurance of any answer.

2. Moreover God does not want a man to forgive an offender unless and until he repents. He commands to rebuke the sinner, but forgive the penitent. There are several Scriptural facts to show this. In the first place God wants a difference made between the good and the bad. One of the characteristics of a good man is that he is one "in whose eyes a vile person

is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord."—Ps. 15:4. God does not treat the good and the bad alike; neither does He want men to do so. He does not want men to accept those whom He rejects; nor to forgive those whom He rebukes; nor to exalt those whom He abases; nor to acquit those whom He condemns. It is offensive to God for a man to spare those whom He has condemned, or to condemn those whom He has forgiven. God commanded Saul to destroy the Amalekites and king Agag. He destroyed the Amalekites, but spared Agag and the best of the cattle and sheep. He lost his throne because he forgave Agag for his hostility to God's people, and neglected to execute him at God's command.

Jeremiah upbraids the false prophets for pronouncing absolution upon the disobedient and impenitent, and crying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."—Jer. 6:14; 8:11. They would kindly forgive those whom God condemned. They would give sweet peace to those whom God would trouble on account of their sins, and whom He says are "like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."—Isa. 57:20f. Instead of crying peace, peace to them, God would have the prophets warn the people of their sins, and give them no rest while they continued in their sins. But it was such false prophets who taught leniency to lechery and lying that persecuted Jeremiah, and put him to death.

Ezekiel preaches in the same strain. The watchman who does not warn and rebuke, but instead silently ignores, kindly condones, or leniently forgives,

is required to give an account for every soul that is lost through his policy or neglect. If man is not warned and reproved by the prophet, and the man is lost, God will require the blood of that man at his hands.—Ezek. 33 : 1-16.

Neglecting or refusing to reprove or warn those who are wicked, or those with whom God has a controversy, is very similar to the case of one parent petting and defending a naughty child while the other parent is trying to correct or to punish it. This is on par too, with the case of a person who is trying to persuade a man to do right, while another person is persuading him to do wrong. This is more than a mere illustration. "God is angry with the wicked every day."—Ps. 7 : 11. Yet He loves them. And while He is indignant at their sins, He is endeavoring to bring them to repentance. He never tries to pacify them in their sins, unless their doom is sealed, and He is waiting to cut them off. Yet forgiving them without requiring them to repent would do that very thing.

Men are repeatedly commanded to rebuke the sinner. Moses commanded, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him."—Lev. 19 :17. Some carping critics might complain that that was under the Old Testament Dispensation. But the command is just as clear in the New Testament, where it is repeated several times. There is no higher authority than is Christ Himself, and He has given us the clearest statement on the subject, and in true perspective. He says, "Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive

him."—Luke 17:3f. Notice that He does not say, "If thy brother trespass against thee, forgive him; but rebuke him." The command is very clear to rebuke the sinner, and forgive the penitent.

3. Furthermore, forgiving a man who is impenitent, is honoring a man, and a wicked man at that, at God's expense. Forgiving a man is honoring him. And every time we forgive an impenitent sinner, we are exalting him and honoring him. That detracts just so much from the dignity and standing of God. It is a humiliation for a man to have his enemies exalted before him and against him. But every man who forgives an impenitent sinner, one whom God will not forgive, is exalting God's enemies before Him, and against Him. Men can preserve the standing of God before the world only by emphasizing and insisting upon His holiness, His unswerving righteousness, and His unchanging repugnance to all sin. Forgiving those whom God refuses to forgive because of their impenitence is virtually saying that God is unjust to them in not forgiving them, and in charging them with a sin which is no sin at all. So forgiving an impenitent sinner whom we acknowledge that God will not forgive, and refuses to forgive, is really an attack upon the character and administration of God. Then again, people forget that forgiving an impenitent sinner lines up both the forgiver and the forgiven against God, for God is against the impenitent. When men forgive an impenitent sinner whom they acknowledge God will not forgive, that act puts them at cross-purposes with God Himself.

4. Further still, this is attacking the will and the law of God as expressed in His word. This is really

a kind of mob law, or rather of mob lawlessness, in kindly liberating all the criminal culprits of the kingdom of darkness, and reinstating them in the kingdom of God, and against His will. The person who does this, exalts both the sinner and himself against God, and over God. This is the very sin which caused Satan to be cast out of heaven. This is really rank lawlessness of the worst kind, to acquit without due consideration all the criminals condemned by the Great Judge. We condemn civil officers here for liberating a clear case of criminal conduct. We also condemn a judge who will try to liberate a man whom the jury has pronounced guilty, or a sheriff or jailer who will liberate a man who has been justly convicted and incarcerated in prison. Yet in the case of men, the process of conviction may have been faulty and unjust, and liberation may have been justifiable. But in the case of the Omniscient Judge, what presumption would it be for a poor fallen finite man to liberate a man whom He has condemned, and forgive those whom He has adjudged guilty! But every one who forgives an impenitent sinner acquits those who stand legally condemned, not by man, but by the High Court of Heaven. Those who forgave Barabbas, crucified Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Forgivingness and Forgiveness.

I. It is a perplexing question to many to adjust themselves properly toward the impenitent, and not be unforgiving. But christians must always have a forgiving spirit toward the sinner, even when they reprove him, and even if he is still impenitent. They must forgive all who repent, even to seventy times seven times, which really means every time they truly repent. This statement teaches that men must always have a forgiving spirit toward all men, both friend and foe, both good and bad, both penitent and impenitent; but it requires them to forgive the penitent always. They must have forgivingness toward both, but forgiveness toward all who repent. They must forgive the penitent, but they must not forgive the impenitent.

1. That it is possible to have a forgiving spirit toward the impenitent, and yet not forgive them, is shown by the fact that God does that very thing, and wants us to be like Him in all our moral conduct. The clearest expression of this fact is found in Isaiah. He expresses it very concisely and precisely when He says of God, "that for all this His anger is not turned away; but His hand is stretched out still."—Isa. 5:25; 9:12, 21; 10:4. He was still angry with them; but He was still holding out forgiveness to them when they would repent. Solomon said of the rebellious, that God was offering them pardon, but would permanently close

the door of mercy against them unless they repented soon.—Prov. 1:22-33. Christ showed the same disposition toward the impenitent at Jerusalem. After He pours forth the vials of His wrath against their rebellion and impenitence, He closes up His plaint with a heart-breaking wail over them. If they had repented, He would have forgiven them. But as they will not repent, He positively and firmly declares that "Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."—Mat. 23:37-39. He had forgivingness for them; but He did not, and would not forgive them till they repented.

2. On the other hand, both God the Father and God the Son show a forgiving spirit toward all who repent. In fact, repeated instances show both of them forgiving men who manifest any sincere repentance. Christ is represented as forgiving men before they asked for forgiveness when they repented. When the man sick of the palsy was brought before Him, he immediately forgave him his sins, before a word is recorded as being said, and insisted that they were forgiven in spite of the objections of the cavilling Jews.—Mat. 9:2-8. He also forgave the woman taken in adultery before she asked for forgiveness. For no doubt she expected none. He doubtless saw that she was penitent, and refused to listen to the malicious accusations of her accusers.—John 8:1-11. He always seemed anxious and willing to forgive, and it seemed to be so easy for Him to forgive. But He was unsparing toward the impenitent.

II. There are several differences between forgivingness and forgiveness. When properly studied, the

Scriptures make it all plain. But many christian people have never studied the implications of certain passages of Scripture with regard to forgiveness. A few contrasts may serve to distinguish more clearly between them.

1. In the first place forgivingness is the disposition or spirit; while forgiveness is the act itself.

2. Forgivingness is pardon offered on the fulfilment of the required conditions, but withheld because conditions are not complied with; forgiveness is pardon freely bestowed after the proper conditions have been fulfilled.

3. Forgivingness **kindly** reproves the sinner of his sins no matter whether he is penitent or impenitent; forgiveness graciously buries them, and like God Himself kindly defends instead of condemns the forgiven penitent, just as Christ did the condemned woman, or the man who was healed of the palsy.

4. Forgivingness reminds the sinner of his sins, so that if possible he may be led to repent of them; forgiveness forgets them, and like God, kindly remembers them no more against him forever.—Ps. 79:8; Isa. 43:25.

5. Forgivingness declares the law of condemnation against all sin and wrong, and especially against all unrepented wrong; forgiveness removes the condemnation, and graciously repeats to the forgiven, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—Rom. 8:1.

6. Forgivingness would not mistreat the impenient, nor, on the other hand, be intimate with him, but he

would hold himself somewhat in reserve; but forgiveness would remove all restraints and reserves and would be kind and cordial.

III. When the writer first preached this doctrine of forgiveness only for penitent, and forgivingness toward the impenitent, the minister to whom he mentioned these views, at first expressed a doubt, but then said, "never thought of it that way before. But since I have considered it, the position seems to be quite reasonable and Scriptural. And just the other day I read a story which seems to me to illustrate quite aptly the difference between forgivingness and forgiveness. And I will relate it to you, and you can use it whenever you see fit." He said the plot of the story was laid in the State of Mississippi. A farmer's wife had called in her husband and sons from their work to dinner. One of the boys insisted on eating without washing. His mother insisted that he wash before he eat. He still refused to wash, complaining that he was too tired and hungry to wash. After repeated refusals to wash, his mother took him by the arm, and led him away from the table till he should wash his hands and face and comb his hair. He sulked around, and would not wash, nor was he allowed to return to the table. After dinner he returned with his father and brothers to his work in the field. But along about two o'clock, his appetite clamored for satisfaction so emphatically that he returned to the house. He washed very thoroughly, and wiped his face quite dry. Then he carefully combed his hair. After he had finished his ablutions and his toilet, he repaired to the dining room, and said, "Mother, I am

very hungry, and I have carefully washed and wiped my face and hands, and combed my hair, and mother, please let me have some dinner. I am so hungry." His mother was very glad, and kindly replied, "Yes, John, I will. I have kept your dinner warm for you. For I thought you would get hungry, and would want to eat. Come on, John, and I will set it out for you." Then John sat down and ate with great relish, for he was very hungry indeed. But he might have eaten at noon if he had only washed and combed his hair, and come to the table in the proper manner. Now this mother absolutely refused to forgive her son's rudeness and bad manners, and let him come to the table dirty and unkempt. His mother was very anxious to let him have dinner. The very fact that she kept his dinner warm for him showed that she had forgivingness in her heart, in spite of the fact that she did not forgive him, and absolutely refused to let him eat while he was dirty and unkempt. She had forgivingness, but absolutely refused to forgive till her son repented, and washed and combed.

This very aptly illustrates the difference between forgivingness and forgiveness. God has graciously and generously prepared his table, and has kindly invited all to come. Some properly prepare and come. Others refuse to come. A few insist on coming to the wedding table of the Lamb unprepared. One man came to the table without having on his wedding garment. He was cast into outer darkness. No man is allowed to come unto the table of the Lord unprepared. He wants them to come, and is anxious for them to come. But he will not let them come unprepared.

John Wesley is regarded as authority on all matters pertaining to the christian life and experience, not only by all branches of Methodists, but also by many in other denominations. He held practically the same views in regard to forgivingness and forgiveness as are those here expressed. He did not express his view in exactly the same words, but they meant just the same thing. As indicative of his view, and to emphasize and support the view of the writer, the view of Wesley will be introduced here. In a letter to a young disciple dated August 20, 1773, he speaks of a forgiving spirit on this wise:

"One degree of forgiveness is due to every one, though impenitent; still I love him as I love all men. But the other degree, whereby I should again receive him as a friend, is only due to one who says, 'I repent'; that is, convinces me that he does really repent, and is entirely changed."

Notice here that one degree requires only such a love as man is required to have toward all men. This is mere feeling, which requires only the common offices of kindness and favor due to all humanity, and forbids the exercise of revenge, on the one hand, but also forbids receiving and treating as a friend on the other. But he says that full forgiveness requires reception as a friend, and that is due only to those who have fully convinced him of their sincere repentance, and show it by a change in their outward conduct.

When men are fully penitent, and properly prepared, it is easy for them to believe. No effort at all is required of the man who has met all the demands, and is fully prepared. The boy mentioned above, knew just how

much was required, and he knew when he had fulfilled all of the conditions. And he felt when he had fulfilled all of the conditions that his mother would certainly let him have dinner. He seemed not to doubt it in the least. So when we know God, we have not the slightest doubt that God will forgive us when we have fully repented. So let all true penitents "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." The invitation is to come, but to come prepared. All who have made sufficient preparation are not only allowed but cordially invited. Faith is very easy for those who are prepared. So prepare and come, believing, and trusting God to forgive and save, and save you immediately. Amen.

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